

THE
G H O S T - S E E R !

FROM THE GERMAN

OF

S C H I L L E R .

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

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INTRODUCTION.

LIFE AND WRITINGS OF SCHILLER.

“ FREDERICK SCHILLER was the son of an officer in the Bavarian army, who subsequently attained the rank of major, and served in the campaigns for the disputed succession. Frederick was born at Marbach, a little town in Wurtemburgh, on the 10th day of November, 1759, and was finally bred to the surgical profession. His early education was not very favourable for the developement of those great powers which he afterwards discovered, and which burst forth with sudden and impetuous vigour at the age of nineteen, as if indignant at the scholastic discipline and restraints which had been imposed upon them. Schiller pursued his studies at the public seminary of Ludwigsburg, and for several years he went through the regular examinations preparatory to the clerical profession. As he grew older, however, he performed his tasks with less docility and alacrity; he imbibed no very deep regard for the classics as they were there inculcated; while the scholastic forms and regulations proved still more irksome to him. Even at that early age, he began to discover the peculiar bias of his genius: he was fond of walking, reading, and studying alone; he sought Nature in her loneliest scenes; and would stand gazing on the heavens, or watching the progress of the storm. He continued at this seminary upwards of six years; the most irksome and unprofitable, according to his own admission, that he ever spent. He was compelled to drudge through all the preliminary forms and examinations, indiscriminately insisted upon in the Stutgard system, under the patronage and dictation of the

reigning Duke. In this wretched servitude he went through a course of legal study, which he was only permitted to relinquish in favour of that of medicine, to which he was little more adapted or attached. Instead of taking down notes of the lectures, he was secretly perusing Shakspeare; and procured small editions of Klopstock, Herder, Goethe, Garve, and Lessing, the father of the modern drama of Germany. Early inspired by a perusal of them, he produced an epic poem, like our own Pope, at the age of fourteen; which he as judiciously, however, destroyed.

“ In his second effort, he at once assumed a high rank as one of the popular dramatists of the country. This was his tragedy of ‘The Robbers,’ composed at the age of nineteen; and almost appallingly impressed with the most striking characteristics of a daring, enthusiastic, and impatient spirit. Wild and extravagant as it must be allowed to be, it was the production, so to say, of a future great writer—the luxurious promise of a glorious harvest—the struggle of a lofty mind at issue with its destiny, exhibiting the whole of its gigantic, but untutored strength. The reputation obtained by this, and two subsequent pieces—‘The Conspiracy of Fiesco,’ and ‘Intrigue and Love,’—soon brought Schiller advantageous offers from the theatre of Manheim, one of the best conducted in Germany. During his engagement here, he projected a translation of Shakspeare’s plays, though the tragedy of Macbeth was the only one which he presented to his countrymen in a new dress; but he judiciously abandoned the undertaking, and entered upon the subject of Don Carlos, which he borrowed from the French of the Abbé St. Réal. At the same period he was engaged in a variety of minor works; one of which was a theatrical journal, in which several scenes of his ‘Don Carlos’ first made their appearance. Dramatic essays and poetical effusions, published in the same journal, likewise occupied much of his time. Though commenced in his twenty-fifth year, this tragedy was not completed until long afterwards; nor did it appear entire until 1794, when he was more than thirty-five years of age. Nearly at the same time he began his series of ‘Philosophical Letters,’ which, throughout, display singular ardour and boldness of

enquiry on a great diversity of topics. Schiller now became one of the most popular writers of his age, and he daily received gratifying proofs of it, both of a public and private kind. He himself relates one which he considered the most pleasing of all—a present of two beautiful miniature portraits from the fair originals, accompanied by a very elegant pocket-book, and letters filled with the most flattering compliments to his genius.

“ Upon closing his engagements at Manheim, Schiller took up his residence at Leipsic, where he became acquainted with a number of eminent contemporaries, among whom were Professor Huber, Zollikofer, Hiller, Oeser, and the celebrated actor Reinike. Soon after his arrival, finding himself somewhat disappointed in the extent of his literary views, he had serious intentions of adopting the medical profession, to which his final academic studies had been directed ; but this idea was again abandoned, and he resumed his literary occupations with increased ardour and activity. Though ranking among the chief ornaments of his country as a poet and a dramatist, he still sighed for fresh fields of enterprise, for which he was every way qualified, and in which he ultimately gathered more brilliant and unfading laurels. At no period did he produce more important works, than during his residence at Dresden. It was there he first began to devote his nights, as well as a large portion of the day, to intellectual labour,—a habit which no constitution could long withstand. Besides the interruptions he was so frequently liable to in the day, he was fond of spending his mornings in the woods, or upon the banks of the Elbe ; sometimes sailing upon its bosom ; sometimes wandering, with a book, in its solitary vicinity. He spent a portion of the evening in society ; and then came the baneful night, invariably set apart for the most difficult and abstracted pursuits. It was thus he most probably laid the foundation of his subsequent maladies, and his premature decease. About the year 1787, he visited Weimar, in order to cultivate a personal acquaintance with some of his most celebrated contemporaries. He was there introduced to Wieland, already advanced in years, and to Herder ; and such was the warm reception he met with, that he declared

his intention of fixing his residence at Weimar, then conspicuous for the number of its distinguished writers. Goethe was next added to the list of his acquaintance ; but not, during some period at least, to that of his friends. Men of totally opposite minds and character, in a literary view, their first meeting is described as having been somewhat singular ; by no means cordial and pleasing. Schiller being much younger, and of a reserved temper, was rather surprised, than attracted, by the perfect ease and openness, the versatility and extent of information, which Goethe's conversation exhibited ; and declared, after the interview, that he and Goethe were cast in different moulds, that they lived in different worlds, and that it was almost impossible for them ever to understand, or become ultimately acquainted with each other. 'Time, however,' he concluded, 'will try.' It is gratifying to add, that they subsequently grew sincerely attached to each other, assisted in the same undertakings, and for some period, resided with each other. On Schiller's removal to Jena, where he succeeded Eichhorn in the professorship of history, he entered into a matrimonial connection with a lady of the name of Lengefeld, to whom he had some time before been attached. In a letter to one of his friends, he thus alludes to the event, many months afterwards :—'How different does life now begin to appear, seated at the side of a beloved wife, instead of being forsaken and alone, as I have so long been !'

"During his professorship, Schiller entered upon his history of the Thirty Years' War, a work which appeared in 1791. This is universally admitted to be his chief historical performance, no less in Germany than in other countries. A just comparison, however, can scarcely be instituted, his previous work upon the Netherlands having unfortunately never been carried to a conclusion. In the year 1791, he suffered a very severe attack upon his lungs, from which he with difficulty recovered, after it had greatly shattered his constitution. Still, with returning strength, he resumed his labours with equal ardour, and was never heard to utter a complaint. It was on his recovery, that Schiller, for the first time, studied the new Kantian doc-

trine, though it does not appear how far he proceeded through the labyrinths of the transcendental terminology.

“ A number of productions, amongst which ranks the most finished specimen of his dramatic labours, ‘Wallenstein,’ followed his partial restoration to health. But the ardour and impetuosity with which he composed, and which was become too habitual to him for restraint, more especially in his lyric pieces, and his tragedies, brought on a dangerous relapse. All human aid, and human hope, proved alike in vain; and on the 9th day of May, 1805, his disorder reached its crisis, and Schiller, only in his forty-sixth year, had but a few hours to live.

“ Early that morning he grew delirious; but soon this was observed gradually to subside, and he appeared to be settling into a deep slumber. In this state, after continuing during several hours, he awoke about four o’clock in the afternoon, with entire composure, and a perfect consciousness of his situation. His manner was firm and tranquil: he took a tender farewell of his friends and family; and on being asked how he felt, he replied, ‘Only calmer and calmer.’ He once spoke with a happy and lively air; ‘Many things are now becoming clearer and clearer to me!’ Soon afterwards he relapsed into deep sleep, became more and more insensible, though still calm, and in that state he almost imperceptibly expired.

“ Schiller wrote but few prose fictions, though these few are enough to display the great powers he possessed. The ‘Geisterseher,’ of which the following is a translation, is the most important and most striking of its kind.”*

This singular romance was written in Dresden, in which town Schiller became enamoured of a beautiful lady, who has been designated by some of his biographers as “Fraulein A——.” The intercourse which subsisted between the poet and his charmer appears not to have been of the most reputable kind; but it is certain that, for a time, she held exclusive possession of his heart, and that she even influenced his writings. She was the original of the Princess Eboli, in his play of Don Carlos; and it is probable that his passion for her might have suggested that important

* Roscoe’s German Novelists, vol. iii

part of his story of "the Ghost-Seer" which delineates the mad love entertained by the Prince, for the lady whose fascinations first enthralled him, as he saw her under the rays of the setting sun, praying in the evening solitude of the church in Venice. During his residence in Dresden, and whilst under the intoxicating influence just mentioned, Schiller's mind might well be supposed to have been in an unsettled state; but, though unguided by any determinate and wholesome purpose, it "hovered among a multitude of vast plans," and was on the watch for any object that might give consistency to his views. "The Ghost-Seer" is the first product arising out of this mental fermentation. Its origin may be traced to the tricks of a certain Count Cagliostro, the prince of quacks, whose juggleries were, about that time, turning the heads of the good people at Paris, who paid their money lavishly, in order to be terrified, and to "snatch a fearful joy."

"The Ghost-Seer" is unquestionably one of the "curiosities of literature." It is alone of its kind; and, perhaps, there is no work in the circle of romance, in which the reader is so irresistibly impelled through the pages; or wherein his longing is more acutely excited for a solution of the mystery of the plot. The agency, supernatural as it seems, is, however, all the effect of imposture and extensive confederacy; though even a knowledge of this, in which the reader is made to participate early in the story, does not abate his wonder at the incidents, or lessen the interest he takes in the characters. If any objection may be made to the scheme of the tale, it might be said that it is too intricate; that the conspiracy against the Prince, and the counter-conspiracy to save him, perplex the attention of him who would trace the windings of the labyrinth. Still, who does not feel a keen sympathy in the bewilderment of the amiable but feeble-minded victim of the conspirators? Who does not participate in the honest wishes of the two Englishmen, who strive to protect him from snares such as never before were spread for the ruin of a human being? Who can look without awe at the inscrutable Armenian, or contemplate, unless with a heart-thrill, the terrific agency which his cunning and his science are able to evoke?

THE

GHOST-SEER.

Narrative of the Count O —.

I AM about to relate an occurrence, which, to many persons, will appear incredible, yet to which I was myself, in great part, an eye-witness. The few who are acquainted with a certain political occurrence, will (if these leaves should find them alive) have a perfect key to the publication; but without this key, it will be looked upon as an addition to the history of deceit and artifice so often imposed upon mankind. The boldness of the undertaking, which malice was able to conjecture and to pursue, must excite astonishment; while the singularity of the means employed, is calculated to create no less surprise. Genuine, bold truth, will conduct my pen; for when these leaves go into the world, I shall probably be no more, and shall never experience the credit with which they are received.

It was on my return to Courland, in the year 17—, about the time of the Carnival, that I paid a visit to the Prince of W—— in Venice. We had known each other in the P—— military service, and renewed here an acquaintance which peace had interrupted. As I wished to see the remarkable city of Venice, the Prince easily persuaded me to bear him company, and to delay my departure from hence until his remittances, which were expected every day, arrived. We agreed to live together as long as our stay at Venice should last, and the Prince was so kind as to offer to share his habitation with me at the Moor Hotel.

He lived in disguise, because he wished to enjoy himself, and his little income did not permit him to maintain the dignity of his rank. Two cavaliers, upon whose secrecy he could entirely rely, composed (besides some trusty servants) his whole household. He shunned expense more from temperance than economy. He fled from diversions of all kinds ; and at the age of thirty-five years, it may be said, that he had resisted all the charms of that voluptuous city. The fair sex was not regarded by him : gravity, and an almost profound melancholy, overshadowed his mind. His passions were still, but obstinate to excess ; his choice slow and fearful ; his attachment warm and lasting. Locked up in his own visionary ideas, he often was a stranger to the world about him ; and, conscious of his own deficiency in the knowledge of mankind, he very seldom observed that line of conduct which influences those who are wary and suspicious. No one, perhaps, was more exposed than he, to suffer himself to be influenced and commanded by the opinion of others. No one was more liable to mental weakness ; but as soon as he was once convinced, he possessed equal courage to combat an acknowledged prejudice, and to die for a new one. As the third prince of his house, he could not have any views for the sovereignty ; his ambition, therefore, on that point, was never awakened : his passion had taken quite another direction. Conscious of his own aversion to being governed by the opinion of others, he never forced his own upon any person as a law. The peaceable paths of solitude, and a private life, were the summit of his wishes. He read much, but without selection. A narrow education, together with being initiated into the military service early in life, served to check all application to the study of literature ; all the knowledge which he afterward, acquired added but little to his ideas. He was a Protestant as all his family had been, by birth, not by enquiry, which he never attempted, though he was, in a certain epoch of his life, an enthusiast ; he never, to my knowledge, became a free-mason.

One evening we, as usual, took a walk by ourselves, very well masked, upon St. Mark's Place. As it grew late, and the people were dispersing, the Prince observed that a

mask followed us every where. The mask was an Armenian, and walked alone. We doubled our steps, and sought by striking into different turns of our road to lose him, but in vain, for he always remained close behind us.

"You have not had, I hope, any intrigue here?" said the Prince at last to me. "The husbands at Venice are very dangerous." "I know not one lady," I replied. "Let us sit down here, and speak German," he continued: "I imagine they mistake us for some other persons." We sat down upon a stone bench, and expected that the mask would pass by. He came straight towards us, and took his seat very close by the side of the Prince; who drew out his watch, and said rather loud, in French, rising at the same time from his seat, "Nine — come! we forget that they wait for us at the *Louvre*." This was only a pretence to deceive the mask as to our route. "Nine!" repeated the mask in the same language, very expressively and slowly. "Wish yourself joy, Prince (whilst he called him by his right name); *at nine o'clock he died*." With this he rose, and went away: we looked at one another very much amazed. "Who is dead?" said the Prince, after a long silence. "Let us follow him," said I, "and request an explanation."

We hurried through all the by-ways of St. Mark, but the mask was not to be found. Chagrined at our bad success, we proceeded to our hotel. The Prince spoke not a word in our way home, but walked apart from me, apparently in deep reflection, and greatly agitated, as he afterwards confessed to me. When we got home, assuming an air of gaiety — "It is indeed laughable," said he, "that a madman should thus be able to disturb the tranquillity of a person's mind by a couple of words."

We wished each other a good night; and as soon as I was in my own room, I noted in my pocket-book the day and the hour when this extraordinary event happened — it was upon a Thursday. The following evening the Prince said to me, — "Let us take a walk again to St. Mark's Place, and try to discover this mysterious Armenian. I am very anxious to unravel this adventure."

I agreed to the proposal, and we remained till eleven

o'clock wandering about the place: the Armenian was nowhere to be seen. We repeated our visits the four following evenings, and each time with the same bad success. The sixth evening, when we left our hotel, I had the foresight to tell the servants where we might be found, if there should be any enquiry after us. The Prince observed this, and praised my attention with a smiling countenance. There was a great crowd upon St. Mark's Place when we arrived there; and we scarcely had gone thirty steps, when I observed the Armenian, who pushed himself through the crowd in great haste, and seemed to be in the act of searching for somebody. We were just upon the point of reaching him, when the Baron F——, one of the Prince's companions, came breathless towards us, and delivered a letter to the Prince.

"It is sealed black," said he; and we thought that it might contain intelligence of great consequence. It struck me like a thunderbolt. The Prince went to a lamp, and began to read the contents. "My cousin is dead," he cried. "When?" said I, interrupting him hastily. He once more read the letter. "Last Thursday, at nine o'clock in the evening." We scarcely had time to recover ourselves from our surprise, when the Armenian appeared. "You are known here, gracious Sire," said he to the Prince. "Hasten to the Moor: you'll find there ambassadors from the Senate, and do not hesitate to accept the honour which they will offer you. The Baron F—— forgot to tell you that your remittances are arrived."

He left us precipitately, and mingled with the crowd. We hastened to our hotel, and found every thing as the Armenian had announced to us. Three noblemen of the Republic were there ready to receive the Prince, and to conduct him with splendour to the assembly, where the first nobility of the city expected him. He had just time enough to let me understand, by a slight hint, that he wished me to sit up for him. About eleven o'clock at night he returned. He came into the room serious and thoughtful; and, after having dismissed the servants, he seized me by the hand. "Count," he said, in the words of Hamlet, "there are more things in heaven and earth

than are dreamt of in our philosophy." "Gracious Sir," I replied, "you seem to forget that you are enriched with the prospect of a sovereignty."* "Do not remind me of that," said the Prince; "I have something of greater importance to me than a crown that now claims my attention, if that Armenian has not been at guess-work." "How is that possible, Prince?" I replied. "Then will I resign all my princely hope for the habit of a monk."

The following evening we went together earlier to the market-place. A heavy shower of rain obliged us to take shelter in a coffee-house, where we observed a number of persons at a gaming-table. The Prince placed himself behind the chair of a Spaniard to see the game played, whilst I went into an adjoining room to read the papers. A little time afterwards I heard a noise. Before the arrival of the Prince, the Spaniard universally lost; but since he entered, the latter won upon every card. The whole game was totally changed, and the bank was in danger of being broken by the man whom this lucky reverse of fortune had made bolder. The Venetian, who kept it, said to the Prince in a surly tone, — "You have changed the luck, and shall quit the table." The Prince looked at him coolly, without giving him an answer, and kept his place; but the Venetian repeated his command in French. The latter thought that the Prince did not understand either language; and, addressing himself to the company with a sneering grin — "Tell me, gentlemen," said he, "how I shall make myself understood by this fool?" Hereupon he stood up, and would have struck the Prince; but the Prince's patience forsaking him, he did not wait for the attack, but seized the Venetian by the throat, and dashed him with violence on the ground. This circumstance threw the whole house into confusion. Upon hearing the uproar, I ran into the room, and unguardedly called him by his name. "Take care, Prince," said I, incautiously; "we are in Venice!"

* The deceased was the hereditary Prince, the only son of the reigning —, who was in years, very sickly, and without the least prospect of having an heir to his dominions. An uncle of our Prince, almost in the same situation, now alone stood between him and the throne. I am obliged to mention this circumstance, as the subject will be treated of in the work.

The name of the Prince excited an universal silence, and soon after a confused murmur ran through the assembly, which appeared to me to have a dangerous tendency. The Italians present crowded round each other, and walked aside. They soon quitted the room, one after the other, and we found ourselves left only with the Spaniard and several Frenchmen. "You are lost, gracious Sir," said a Frenchman, "if you do not leave the city directly. The Venetian, whom you have handled so roughly, is rich enough to hire a bravo; — it will only cost him fifty sequins to be revenged by your death."

The Spaniard, in concert with the Frenchmen, offered to conduct the Prince with safety to his house. We were standing thus consulting what was best to be done, when the door of the room was suddenly opened, and several officers of the *State Inquisition* entered. They produced an order from the government, in which we were both commanded to follow them immediately. They conducted us under a strong escort to a canal, where a boat waited for us. We were ordered to embark; but before we quitted it, our eyes were blindfolded; and, upon our landing, we found that they led us up a stone staircase, and then through a long winding passage over arches, as we could discover by the repeated echoes that sounded under our feet. We soon arrived at another staircase, which in twenty-six steps brought us to the bottom. We then heard a door creak upon its hinges; and when they took the bandage from our eyes, we found ourselves in a spacious hall, encircled by an assembly of venerable old men. All appeared in sable robes; and the hall, hung with black cloth, was dimly lighted by a few scattered tapers. A deadly silence prevailed through the assembly, which caused in us an awful sensation, too powerful to be described. One of the old men, who appeared to be the principal State Inquisitor, came near to the Prince, and spoke to him with a solemn countenance, whilst another set before him the Venetian.

"Do you acknowledge this man to be the same that you used so roughly in the coffee-house?" "Yes!" answered the Prince. Then turning to the prisoner — "Is that the person you would have assassinated this evening?" The

prisoner answered, "Yes." Immediately the judges opened the circle, and we saw, with the utmost horror, the head of the Venetian separated from his shoulders. "Are you satisfied with this sacrifice?" said the State Inquisitor. The Prince fainted in the arms of his conductors. "Go," he continued, with a terrible voice, as he turned towards me; "and think in future more favourably of the administration of justice in Venice."

We could not learn who our unknown friend was, who had thus delivered us, by the arm of justice, from the diabolical plans of the assassin. We reached our habitation terrified in the extreme. It was midnight. The chamberlain Z—— waited for us upon the stairs with great impatience. "How lucky it was," said he to the Prince, as he lighted us up stairs, "that you sent the messenger as you did; the intelligence from the Baron, which was brought to this house from the market-place, excited in us a dreadful anxiety for your safety." "I sent a message!" said the Prince. "When? I know nothing of it." "This evening, after eight o'clock, a person arrived, and said, we must not be alarmed if you should not return until late at night." Here the Prince said to me, — "You, perhaps, without my knowledge, have taken this precaution." "I know nothing of it," said I. "It must certainly be so, your Highness," said the chamberlain; "for here is your watch, which he left with me as a proof that he had been with you." The Prince felt his pocket immediately: the watch was actually gone, and, looking upon that which the chamberlain held in his hand, he acknowledged it to be his own. "Who brought it?" said he, with eagerness. "An unknown mask in an Armenian habit, who immediately went away." We stood and looked at each other in silent horror. "What think you of this?" said the Prince at last, after a long pause; "it is now certain that I have in Venice a secret inspector."

The frightful transactions of this night threw the Prince into a fever, which confined him to his room for eight days. During this time our hotel was crowded with citizens and strangers, who had lately learned the rank of the Prince. They strove to vie with each other in showing civility to

him ; and we saw with pleasure every night how fast suspicion was wearing away. Love-letters and billets came from all quarters. Every person endeavoured to make himself useful. The whole proceedings of the State Inquisition were no longer thought of. In the mean time, the Court of ——— did not wish to hasten the departure of the Prince, and therefore gave instructions to a rich banker in Venice to furnish him with large sums of money. Thus he was put into a condition, contrary to his inclination, of remaining longer in Italy ; and, agreeably to his wishes, I consented not to hasten my departure. As soon as he was so far recovered as to be able to leave his chamber, the physician ordered him to make an excursion upon the Brenta for the benefit of the air. The weather was fine, and we soon made an agreeable party. Just as we were about to step into the gondola, the Prince missed a key to a little box which contained some valuable papers. We returned immediately to look for it. He remembered perfectly to have locked the box the day before, and since that time he had not quitted the room. But all our efforts to discover the key were fruitless: we therefore abandoned the search ; and the Prince, whose soul was above suspicion, gave it over as lost, but requested me not to take any notice of it. The voyage was delightfully enchanting ; the landscape seemed to increase in beauty and variety at every turn of the river ; added to this, a clear sky, which, in the middle of February, formed a May-day. The charming gardens that surrounded the elegant country houses which every where adorned the sides of the Brenta, together with the majestic Venice crowned with a hundred towers, as if rising from the water, offered us one of the most delightful prospects in the world. We lost ourselves entirely in the beautiful magic of the scenery around us. Our spirits were elated ; and even the Prince assumed an air of gaiety, and joined with us in our frolicsome pleasantries. Sweet music occupied our attention, when we got to the shore about two Italian miles from the town. It proceeded from a small village where they were holding a fair. Here every art was practised by the company. A troop of young maidens and children, dressed in a theatrical manner, wel-

comed us with a pantomimic dance. The invention was new: nimbleness and grace animated every motion. Before the dance was ended, one of them, who seemed to be the principal person, and who acted the part of the queen, suddenly stopped, as if restrained by an invisible power. She stood still; all followed her example; and the music ceased. An universal silence prevailed in the whole assembly, whilst she remained with her eyes fixed upon the ground as in a profound trance; then she became as if inspired, looked wild, and cried in a transport of joy—"A king is amongst us!"

She arose, took her crown from her head, and placed it at the feet of the Prince. All who were present directed their eyes towards the Prince, who was a long time uncertain what could be the meaning of this juggle, so well had she acted the monkey tricks of this farce. At length an universal clapping of hands interrupted this silence. I looked at the Prince, and perceived that he was not a little concerned and hurt to be examined by the enquiring eyes of the company. He distributed money to the children, and hastened from the crowd. We had not gone far, when a venerable monk came from the throng, and placed himself in the path we were pursuing.

"Sir," said the monk, "bestow some of your money upon Madonna; you will need her prayers."

He spoke this in a tone which startled us—the crowd, however, soon separated him from us. Our suite was in the mean time increased. An English lord, whom the Prince had seen before at Nizza, several merchants from Leghorn, a German prelate, a French abbé, with several ladies, and a Russian officer, attached themselves to our party. The physiognomy of this last had something so remarkable about it, that it attracted our attention. Never in my life did I see so many traits, and so little character; so much inviting benevolence, and such forbidding coldness, painted together in one man's countenance. Every passion seemed to have formerly dwelt there, and to have abandoned it. Nothing remained but the still piercing look of a perfect man of the world. Every eye was fixed upon him

wherever he went. This stranger followed at a distance, and seemed indifferent to whatever was going on. We arrived at the booth where a lottery was kept: the ladies bought tickets—we followed their example, and the Prince also purchased a share. He won a snuff-box; and, when he opened it, I perceived him turn pale, and start back with the utmost surprise—the little key he had lost was in it. “What is this?” said he to me when we were alone, with a fixed countenance; “an unknown power pursues me; an all-powerful being hovers over me; an invisible agency, which I cannot flee from, watches over all my actions. I must seek the Armenian, and obtain an explanation from him.”

The sun was setting as we arrived at the pleasure-house where the supper was served up. The name of the Prince had increased our party to the number of sixteen persons. Besides our former companions, a virtuoso from Rome, several Swiss, and an adventurer from Palermo, who wore an uniform, and gave himself out for a captain, insinuated themselves into our society. It was agreed to spend the whole evening here, and to return home by torchlight. The entertainment at the table was good, and the conversation very sprightly; the Prince could not refrain from relating the adventure of the key, which excited a general astonishment. A great dispute arose concerning this affair:—the major part of the company had the temerity to think all these cunning tricks depended upon witchcraft. The Abbé, who had already drank a sufficient quantity of wine, challenged the whole kingdom of ghosts into the ring. The Englishman talked blasphemy, while another made sign of the cross to avert the devil. A few, in the number of whom was the Prince, maintained that it was better not to give any decided opinion upon these subjects. During this conversation the Russian officer entertained himself with the ladies, and seemed to be perfectly inattentive to our discussion. In the height of this dispute, no one observed that the Sicilian had retired. A short time afterwards he returned, clothed in a mantle, and placed himself behind the chair of the Frenchman.

“You have had the boldness,” said he, “to challenge

all the kingdom of ghosts. — Will you try one ?” “ Yes !” said the Abbé, “ if you will undertake to bring one before me.” “ That I will,” replied the Sicilian, turning himself about, “ when these ladies and gentlemen shall have left us.” “ Why so !” exclaimed the Englishman ; “ a jovial ghost will enjoy himself in such good company.” “ I will not answer for the consequences,” said the Sicilian. “ Oh, heavens !” cried the ladies, and fled, terrified, from their seats. “ Let your ghost come,” said the Abbé, daringly, “ but warn him beforehand that he will find here sharp-pointed tools ;” at the same time endeavouring to borrow a sword. “ You may do, in that respect, as you please,” said the Sicilian coolly, “ when you see it.”

Here he turned himself towards the Prince. “ Gracious Sir,” said he to him, “ you believe that your key was in strange hands — can you guess in whose ?” “ No.” “ Do you suspect any body ?” “ I had certainly a suspicion.” “ Should you know the person if you were to see him ?” “ Without doubt.”

Here the Sicilian put aside his mantle, and took from under it a looking-glass, which he held before the eyes of the Prince. “ Is this the man ?” The Prince started back with the utmost terror. “ What have you seen ?” asked I. “ The Armenian !” The Sicilian put the glass under his mantle. “ Was that the person you meant ?” enquired the whole company. “ The very same.”

Upon this, every countenance was changed, no one was heard to laugh, and all eyes were fixed attentively upon the Sicilian. “ Monsieur Abbé,” said the Englishman, “ this thing becomes serious : I advise you to think of your retreat.” “ The fellow is in league with the devil,” cried the Frenchman, and rushed out of the house. The ladies ran shrieking from the hall — the virtuoso followed them — the German prelate snored in his chair — the Russian remained sitting as if perfectly indifferent to what was passing.

“ You thought, perhaps, to have excited a great laugh,” said the Prince, “ against this boaster, if he had not gone out ; or did you intend to have performed what you promised ?” “ It is true,” said the Sicilian, “ with the

Abbé I was not in earnest ; I took him at his word, because I knew that the coward would not suffer me to go so far as to put it in execution. The thing itself is of too serious a nature to make a joke of." " You maintain, then, that you have it in your power to do what you asserted ?" The magician was silent, and seemed to be studying the expressive countenance of the Prince. " Yes," answered he, at length.

The curiosity of the Prince was already excited to the highest degree, for he had always believed in supernatural beings, and this act of the Armenian brought back to his mind all his former reflections on this subject, which reason had in some measure driven away. He went aside with the Sicilian, and I heard him conversing with him very earnestly. " You have before you a man," continued he, " who burns with impatience for an explanation of this affair. I would esteem that man as my benefactor, as my best friend, who would, in this respect, remove my doubts, and dissipate the mist from my eyes. — Will you do me this great service ?" " What do you require of me ?" said the magician with thoughtfulness. " To give me immediately a proof of your art ; let me see an apparition." " Why should I do this ?" " That you may judge, from a nearer acquaintance, whether I am worthy of higher instruction." " I esteem you above all others, mighty Prince. A secret power in your countenance, which you yourself are ignorant of, bound me at first sight irresistibly to you. You are more powerful than you are aware of. You have an undoubted right to command all my power, but —" " Then allow me to see an apparition." " I must be first certain that you do not make this request out of curiosity ; for, although the supernatural powers are subjected to my will in some respects, it is under the sacred condition that I do not abuse my authority." " My motives are the purest. I wish for an explanation of facts."

Here they left their places, and approached to a distant window, where I could not hear what was said. The Englishman, who had also heard this conversation, took me aside. " Your prince has a noble mind," said he ;

"but I pity him, for I will bet my life he has to deal with a sharper." "That will be proved," said I, "when he comes to investigate this matter." "Let me tell you," said the Englishman, "that the devil makes himself very dear. He will not practise his art without touching the cash. There are nine of us. We will make a collection. This will break the neck of his scheme, and perhaps open the eyes of the Prince." "I am content," said I."

The Englishman immediately threw six guineas into a plate, and gathered in the ring. Each gave several louis. The Russian especially was highly pleased at our proposal; he put a bank note of a hundred sequins into the plate—a piece of extravagance which startled the Englishman. We brought the collection to the Prince. "Have the goodness," said the Englishman, "to entreat, in our names, that gentleman to let us see a proof of his art, and persuade him to accept this small token of our acknowledgments for his trouble." The Prince also put a costly ring into the plate, and presented it to the Sicilian. He considered of our proposal. "Gentlemen," he began, "this unexpected generosity is highly flattering. I obey your wishes. Your desires shall be fulfilled." In the meantime he rang the bell. "With respect to this money," he continued, "to which I have no right, if you will give me leave, I will present it to the nearest monastery, as a gratuity towards so benevolent an institution. This ring I shall always keep, as a valuable proof of the goodness of the best of princes."

Here the master of the house entered, to whom he immediately delivered the money. "He is still a swindler," said the Englishman, "although he refuses the gold. It is done that he may get more into the Prince's favour." Another said, "The landlord is in league with him." "What would you wish to see?" said the Sicilian to the Prince. "Let us have a great man," said the Lord: "challenge the Pope Ganginelli; it will be the same to this gentleman." The Sicilian bit his lips. "I dare not call for one who has received extreme unction." "That is bad," said the Englishman; "perhaps we should learn from him of what disorder he died." "The Marquis of

Lanoy," said the Prince, " was a French brigadier in a former war, and my most intimate friend. In a battle near Hastinbeck he received a deadly wound. They took him to my tent, where he soon after died in my arms. Before he expired—' Prince,' said he, ' I shall never again behold my native country ; I will therefore intrust you with a secret, which is known to no one but myself. In a cloister upon the borders of Flanders, there lives a——' At that instant he expired. Death destroyed the thread of his discourse. I could wish to have him brought before me, and to hear the conclusion of his tale." " Well requested, by Heaven," said the Englishman ; " I shall esteem you as the greatest conjurer in the world if you comply with this request." We admired the wise choice of the Prince, and unanimously gave our consent to the proposition. In the mean time the magician walked up and down the room with hasty steps, and seemed to be holding a conference with himself. " And was that all which the deceased communicated to you?" " All." " Did you make any further enquiries, on account of what you heard, in his native country?" " It was in vain." " Did the Marquis of Lanoy live irreproachably?—for I dare not call any one I please from the dead." " He died with penitence for the sins of his youth." " Have you about you any token of his?" " Yes." The Prince had actually a snuff-box, on the lid of which a miniature picture of the Marquis was painted in enamel, which he usually laid near him upon the table. " I do not desire to know what it is. Leave me alone: you shall see the deceased."

We were desired to go into another apartment, and wait until he called for us. At the same time he ordered all the moveables to be taken from the hall, the windows to be taken out, and the window shutters to be put close to. He also ordered the landlord, with whom he had already been conniving, to bring in a vessel filled with hot coals, and to put out all the fires in the house carefully with water. Before we returned, he made us all promise that we would observe a profound silence during the whole of what we should see or hear. All the doors of the

rooms behind us leading to this apartment were fastened. The clock had struck eleven. A deadly silence prevailed through the whole house. Before we went out, the Russian said to me — “ Have we any loaded pistols with us ? ” “ Why ? ” said I. “ It is at all events convenient,” answered he. “ Wait a minute, and I will go and see after some.”

He went out, and the Baron and myself opened a window which looked towards another room, and we thought we heard people talking together, and a noise as if they were placing a ladder under it ; but as that might only be a conjecture, I dared not give it out as certain. The Russian returned with a brace of pistols, after being absent about half an hour. We saw him load them. It was now near two o'clock when the magician appeared again, and announced that he was prepared. Before we returned, he ordered us to pull off our shoes, and to appear in our shirts, stockings, and under garments. The doors as before were all fastened. We found, when we returned into the hall, a large circle made with coals, in which we could all stand very conveniently. Round about the room, and by the four walls, the boards were taken away, so that we seemed to stand as it were upon an island. An altar, hung with black cloth, was erected in the middle of the circle, under which was spread a carpet of red silk ; a Chaldean Bible lay open near a death's head upon the altar, and a silver crucifix was fastened in the centre. Instead of candles, spirits were burning in a silver vessel. A thick smoke of olive wood darkened the hall, which almost extinguished the lights. The conjurer was clothed as we were, but barefooted. On his bare neck he wore an amulet* suspended by a chain of human hair. Upon his loins he wore a white mantle, which was decorated with magical characters and mysterious figures. He made us join hands, and maintain a deep silence. Above all, he recommended us not to ask the apparition any questions. He requested the English-

* Amulet was the name of a charm made of wood or other materials, and on which was engraved particular words and characters, and worn about the neck, to subvert the machinations of the Devil and his agents. They were held in high esteem by the Arabs, Turks, and Jews, and particularly amongst the Catholics.

man and myself (for he seemed to entertain the greatest suspicion of us) to hold two drawn swords, steadily and cross-wise, an inch above his head, as long as the ceremony should last. We stood in a half circle around him. The Russian officer pressed near to the Englishman, and stood next to the altar. The magician placed himself upon the carpet, with his face towards the east, sprinkled holy water to the four points of the compass, and bowed thrice before the Bible. A quarter of an hour passed in ceremonious acts, perfectly unintelligible to us ; at the end of which, he gave those a sign who stood behind him to hold him fast by the hair. Struggling apparently with dreadful convulsions, he called the deceased by name three times ; at the last, he stretched out his hand towards the crucifix. We instantly experienced a violent shock, which separated our hands. A sudden clap of thunder shook the house to its foundation ; at the same time the window shutters rattled, and all the doors were burst open. The apparatus fell in pieces, and as soon as the light was extinguished, we observed distinctly on the wall over the chimney-piece the figure of a man clothed in a bloody garment, with a pale and livid aspect.

“ Who called me ? ” cried a faint, hollow voice. “ Thy friend,” said the conjurer, “ who venerates thy memory, and prays for thy soul.” At the same time he mentioned the name of the Prince. “ What does he want ? ” continued the ghost, after a very long pause. “ He wishes to hear your confession to the end, which you began in this world but did not finish.” “ In a cloister upon the borders of Flanders there lives—” Here the house shook again, the door opened of its own accord, and a violent clap of thunder was heard, as a flash of lightning illuminated the room. Immediately another figure, bloody and pale like the first, appeared at the threshold. The spirits in the vase began to burn again, and the hall was as it first appeared.

“ Who is among us ? ” cried the magician, looking with horror and astonishment at the spectators. “ I did not much wish for thee.” The ghost immediately walked with a slow and majestic step to the altar, and stood upon the carpet opposite to us. It seized the crucifix, and the first

apparition instantly vanished. "Who is it that has called me?" said the second apparition. The magician began to tremble. Fear and astonishment almost overpowered us. I now seized a pistol—the magician wrested it from my hand, and fired at the ghost. The ball rolled along the altar, and the figure remained amidst the smoke unhurt. The magician immediately sunk down in a fit.

"What have we here?" exclaimed the Englishman with astonishment, as he endeavoured to strike the ghost with his sword. The apparition arrested his arm, and the sword fell to the ground. Here the sweat of anguish started from my forehead, and the Baron confessed to us afterwards that he employed himself in praying. All this time the Prince stood fearless and unmoved, with his eyes riveted upon the figure. "Yes!" said he at last, pathetically, "I know thee: thou art Lanoy—thou art my friend. From whence dost thou come?" "I cannot divulge the mysteries of eternity.—Ask me any question that relates to my existence on earth." "Who lives in the cloister," said the Prince, "of which you gave me notice at the hour of your death?" "My daughter." "How! Have you ever been a father?" "I would that I had not been." "Are you not happy, Lanoy?" "God is my judge." "Can I not render you any service in this world?" "None; but think of yourself." "How must I do that?" "You will learn it at Rome."

"Immediately a clap of thunder was heard—a thick smoke filled the room; and when it cleared up, the figure had vanished. I pushed open a window-shutter—it was day-light.

The conjurer soon recovered his senses. "Where are we?" he cried, when he saw the day-light. The Russian officer stood close behind him; and looking over his shoulder, "Juggler," he said, with a piercing frown, "this is the last time thou wilt ever have it in thy power to summon another ghost to appear on earth." The Sicilian turned hastily round; and, looking stedfastly in his face, uttered a loud shriek, and fell senseless on the ground. Immediately the pretended Russian was discovered by the Prince to be no other person than his mysterious friend the Armenian.

No language can paint the horror this circumstance occasioned in the mind of the Prince, and the consternation that generally pervaded the company. We stood motionless as we surveyed this awful being, who penetrated us to the soul with his looks. A dead silence reigned for some minutes: at length several loud knocks at the door roused us from a state of stupefaction. The noise continued, and the door was soon after shattered in pieces, when several police officers, with a guard, rushed into the hall. "Here we find them altogether," cried the commander, turning to his followers. "In the name of the government," (addressing himself to us) cried he, "I arrest you all."

We had scarcely time to recollect ourselves, ere we were all surrounded by the guard. The Russian, whom I shall now call the Armenian, took the commander aside; and notwithstanding the confusion we were in, I observed that he whispered something in his ear, and showed him a paper, at the sight of which the man bowed respectfully and retired — as he passed us he took off his hat. "Forgive me, gentlemen," said he, "for having confounded you with this impostor. I will not ask who you are; this person assures me that I have men of honour before me."

In the mean time he gave his people a hint to withdraw from us. He commanded them, however, to seize the Sicilian, and to bind him. "This fellow has reigned long enough," added he; "we have been upon the watch for him these seven months."

The miserable wretch was indeed an object of pity. The sudden fright which the second apparition occasioned, and the unexpected reproach from the Armenian, had overpowered his senses. He suffered himself to be bound without the least opposition. His eyes rolled in his head, and a death-like paleness spread itself over his countenance, as at intervals he heaved convulsive sighs. Every moment we expected that he would become frantic. The Prince pitied his distress, and undertook to solicit his discharge from the leader of the police, to whom he discovered his rank. "Gracious Prince," said the officer, "do you know who this man is? and for whom you so generously intercede? The tricks which he practised to deceive you are the

least of his crimes. We have already secured his accomplices, and they have discovered transactions which he has been concerned in of the most horrid nature. He may think himself well off if he escapes with banishment to the galleys."

In the mean time we observed the landlord and his family fettered and led through the yard. "Is that man guilty?" cried the Prince; "what has he done?" "He was his accomplice," said the officer, "and assisted him in his mountebank tricks and robberies, and shared the spoil with him. I will convince you immediately, gracious Sir, of the truth of my assertion" (turning towards his followers). "Search the house," he cried, "and bring me immediately intelligence as to what you discover."

The Prince looked for the Armenian, but he was gone. In the confusion which this unexpected circumstance occasioned, he found means to steal off without being observed. The Prince was inconsolable: he determined to send servants after him, and also search for him himself; and, hurrying with me to the window, we observed the whole house surrounded by the populace, whom the account of this event had drawn to the spot. "It is impossible to make our way through the crowd," said I; "and if it is the intention of the Armenian to elude our search, he certainly knows the means to do it effectually: let us rather stay here a little longer, gracious Sir. Perhaps this officer of the police can give us some information respecting him, to whom he has, if I have rightly observed, discovered himself."

We recollected that we were still in an undress, and promising to return soon, we hastened into a room to put on our clothes as quickly as possible. When we came back, the searching of the house was finished. After they had removed the altar, and forced up the boards of the floor, they discovered a vault where a man was able to sit upright, which was separated by a secret door from a narrow staircase that led to a gloomy cave. In this abyss they found an electrical machine, a clock, and a small silver bell; which last, as well as the electrical machine, had a communication with the altar and the crucifix that was fixed upon it. A hole had been made in the window-shutter opposite the chimney,

which opened and shut with a slide. In this hole, as we learned afterwards, was fixed a magic lantern, from which the figure of the ghost had been reflected on the opposite wall over the chimney. From the garret and the cave they brought several drums, to which large leaden bullets were fastened by strings: these had probably been used to imitate the roaring of thunder which we had heard. In searching the Sicilian's clothes, they found in a case different powders, genuine mercury in vials and boxes, phosphorus in a glass bottle, and a ring, which we immediately knew to be magnetic, because it adhered to a steel button that had been placed near to it by accident. In his coat pockets were a rosary, a jew's beard, a dagger, and a pocket pistol. "Let us see if it is loaded," said one of the watch, and fired up the chimney. "Jesus Maria!" cried a voice, which we knew to be the same as that we had heard when the first spirit appeared; and at the same instant we beheld a bleeding person tumbling down the chimney. "What! not yet at rest, poor ghost?" cried the Englishman, whilst we started back affrighted. "Go to thy grave. Thou hast appeared what thou wast not, and now thou wilt be what thou hast appeared." "Jesus Maria! I am wounded!" replied the man. The ball had fractured his right leg. Care was immediately taken to have the wound dressed.

"But who art thou?" said the English lord; "and what evil spirit brought thee here?" "I am a poor solitary monk," answered the wounded man. "A strange gentleman offered me a zechin to—" "Repeat your magical lesson. And why did you not withdraw immediately you had finished?" "I was waiting for a signal to continue my speech, as had been agreed on between us; but as this signal was not given, I was endeavouring to get off, when I found the ladder had been removed." "And what was the formula he taught thee?"

The wounded man fainted: nothing more could be got from him. When we observed his features more minutely, we discovered him to be the same man that stood in the pathway of the Prince the evening before, and asked alms for the Madonna. The Prince addressed the leader of the watch, giving him at the same time some

pieces of gold. "You have rescued us," said he, "from the hands of a deceiver, and done us justice even without knowing us: increase our gratitude by telling us who the stranger was, that, by speaking only a few words, procured us our liberty?" "Whom do you mean?" asked the officer, with a countenance which seemed to indicate that the question was useless. "The gentleman in a Russian uniform, who took you aside, showed you a written paper, and whispered in your ear, in consequence of which you immediately set us free." "Do not you know the gentleman?" said the officer. "Was he not one of your company?" "No," said the Prince; "and I have very important reasons for wishing to be acquainted with him." "He is a perfect stranger to me too," replied the officer; "even his name is unknown to me. I saw him to-day for the first time in my life." "How! And was he able in so short a space of time, and by using only a few words, to convince you that we were all innocent?" "Undoubtedly, Sire, with a single word." "And this was?—I confess I wish to know it." "This stranger, my Prince," (weighing the zechins in his hand)—"you have been too generous for me to make it any longer a mystery—this stranger is an officer of the Inquisition." "Of the Inquisition!—What! that man?" "Nothing else, my Prince. I was convinced of it by the paper which he showed to me." "That man did you say? It cannot be." "I will tell you more, my Prince; it was upon his information that I have been sent here to arrest the conjurer."

We looked at each other with the utmost astonishment.

"Now we know," said the English lord, "why the poor devil of a sorcerer started when he came near his face. He knew him to be a spy, and for that reason he made such a horrible outcry, and threw himself at his feet." "No," interrupted the Prince; "this man is whatever he wishes to be, and whatever the moment requires him to be. No mortal ever knew what he really was. Did not you see the knees of the Sicilian sink under him, when he said, with a terrible voice, 'Thou shalt no more call a ghost.' There is something mysterious in this matter. No person can persuade me that one man should

be thus alarmed at the sight of another, without some most essential reason." "The conjurer will probably explain it the best," said the English lord, "if that gentleman" (pointing to the officer) "will procure us an opportunity of speaking to his prisoner." The officer consented to it; and, after having agreed with the Englishman to visit the Sicilian in the morning, we returned to Venice.*

Lord Seymour (this was the name of the Englishman) called upon us very early in the forenoon, and was soon after followed by a person whom the officer had intrusted with the care of conducting us to the prison. I forgot to mention, that one of the Prince's domestics, a native of Bremen, who had served him many years with the strictest fidelity, and who possessed his confidence, had been missing for several days. Whether he had met with any accident, been kidnapped, or had voluntarily absented himself, was a secret to every one. The last supposition was extremely improbable, as his conduct had always been regular and irreproachable. All that his companions could recollect was, that he had been for some time very melancholy, and that, whenever he had a moment's leisure, he used to visit a certain monastery in the Giudecca, where he had formed an acquaintance with some monks. This led us to suppose that he might have fallen into the hands of the priests, and had been persuaded to turn Catholic. The Prince was indifferent about matters of this kind, and the few enquiries he caused to be made proving unsuccessful, he gave up the search. He, however, regretted the loss of this man, who had so constantly attended him in his campaigns, — had always been faithfully attached to him, — and whom it was therefore difficult to replace in a foreign country. The very same day the Prince's banker, whom he had commissioned to provide him with another servant, came at the moment we were going out; he pre-

* Count O——, whose narrative I have thus far literally copied, describes minutely the various effects of this adventure upon the mind of the Prince, and of his companions, and recounts a variety of tales of apparitions, which this event gave occasion to introduce. I shall omit giving them to the reader, on the supposition that he is as curious as myself to know the conclusion of the adventure, and its effects on the conduct of the Prince. I shall only add, that the Prince got no sleep the remainder of the night, and that he waited with impatience for the moment which was to disclose this incomprehensible mystery.

sented to the Prince a well-dressed man, of a good appearance, about forty years of age, who had been for a long time secretary to a procurator ; spoke French and a little German, and was besides furnished with the best recommendations. The Prince was pleased with the man's physiognomy ; and as he declared that he would be satisfied with such wages as his service should be found to merit, the Prince engaged him immediately.

We found the Sicilian in a private prison, where, as the keeper assured us, he had been lodged for the present, to accommodate the Prince, as he was to be confined in future under the lead roofs, to which there is no access. These lead roofs are the most terrible dungeons in Venice. They are situated on the top of the Palace of St. Mark, and the miserable criminals suffer so excessively from the heat of the leads, occasioned by the burning rays of the sun descending directly upon them, that they frequently become distracted. The Sicilian had recovered from his terror, and rose respectfully at the sight of the Prince. He had fetters on one hand and one leg, but he was able to walk about the room. The keeper left the dungeon as soon as we had entered.

" I come," said the Prince, " to request an explanation of you on two subjects. — You owe me the one, and it shall not be to your disadvantage if you grant me the other." " My part is now acted," replied the Sicilian : " my destiny is in your hands." " Your sincerity alone can mitigate your punishment." " Ask, my Prince ; I am ready to answer you. I have nothing more to lose." " You showed me the face of the Armenian in your looking-glass — How was it done ?" " What you saw was no looking-glass — a portrait in pastel behind a glass, representing a man in an Armenian dress, deceived you. The want of light, your astonishment, and my own dexterity, favoured the deception. The picture itself must have been found among the other things seized at the inn." " But how came you so well acquainted with my ideas as to hit upon the Armenian ?" " This was not difficult, my Prince. You have, perhaps, frequently mentioned your adventure with the Armenian at table, in presence of

your domestics. One of my servants got accidentally acquainted with one of yours in the Giudecca, and soon learned from him as much as I wished to know." "Where is this man?" asked the Prince; "I miss him, and in all probability you are acquainted with the place of his retreat, and the reason why he deserted my service." "I swear to you, gracious Sir, that I know not the least of him. I have never seen him myself, nor had any other concern with him than the one before mentioned."

"Go on," said the Prince. "By this means also, I received the first information of your residence, and of your adventures at Venice; and I resolved immediately to profit by them. Your Highness sees that I am ingenuous. I was apprised of your intended excursion on the Brenta — I was prepared for it: and a key, that dropped by chance from your pocket, afforded me the first opportunity of trying my art upon you." "How! Have I been mistaken? The adventure of the key then was a trick of yours, and not of the Armenian? — You say this key fell from my pocket?" "You accidentally dropped it in taking out your purse, and I instantly covered it with my foot. The person of whom you bought the lottery ticket was in concert with me. He caused you to draw it from a box where there was no blank, and the key had been in the snuff-box long before it came into your possession." "It is almost incomprehensible — And the monk who stopped me in my way, and addressed me in a manner so solemn —" "Was the same that I hear has been wounded in the chimney. He is one of my accomplices, and under that disguise has rendered me many important services."

"But what purpose was this intended to answer?" "To render you thoughtful: to inspire you with such a train of ideas as should be favourable to the wonders I intended to make you believe." "The pantomimical dance, which ended in a manner so extraordinary, was at least none of your contrivance." "I had taught the girl who represented the queen. Her performance was the result of my instructions. I supposed your Highness would not be a little astonished to find yourself known in this place, and (I entreat your Highness's pardon) your

adventure with the Armenian gave room for me to hope that you were already disposed to reject natural interpretations, and to search for the marvellous."

"Indeed!" exclaimed the Prince, at once angry and amazed, and casting upon me a significant look — "Indeed, I did not expect this.* But," continued he, after a long silence, "how did you produce the figure that appeared on the wall over the chimney?" "By means of a magic lantern that was fixed in the opposite window-shutter, in which you have, no doubt, observed an opening." "And how did it happen that none of us perceived the lantern?" asked Lord Seymour. "You remember, my Lord, that on your re-entering the room, it was darkened by a thick smoke of olive wood. I used likewise the precaution to place upright against the wall near the window the boards which had been taken up from the floor. By these means I prevented the shutter from coming immediately under your sight. Moreover, the lantern remained covered until you had taken your places, and until there was no further reason to apprehend any examination from the persons in the hall."

"As I looked out of the window in the other pavilion," said I, "I heard a noise like that of a person who was in the act of placing a ladder against the side of the house. Was it really so?" "Yes, my assistant stood upon this ladder to direct the magic-lantern." "The apparition," continued the Prince, "had really a superficial likeness to my deceased friend; and what was particularly striking, his hair, which was of a very light colour, was exactly imitated. Was this mere chance, or how did you come by such a resemblance?" "Your Highness must recollect, that you had at table a snuff-box laid by your plate, with an enamelled portrait of an officer in a French uniform.

* Nor in all probability did my readers. The circumstance of the crown deposited at the feet of the Prince, in a manner so unexpected and extraordinary, and the former prediction of the Armenian, seemed so naturally and so obviously to aim at the same object, that at the first reading of these memoirs, I immediately remembered the deceitful speech of the Witches in the play of Macbeth:

"All hail, Macbeth! hail to thee, Thane of Glamis!
All hail, Macbeth! that shalt be king hereafter!"

When a particular idea has once entered the mind, it necessarily connects with itself every subsequent idea that seems to have the least affinity to it.

I asked whether you had any thing about you as a memorial of your friend. Your Highness answered in the affirmative. I conjectured it might be the box. I had attentively considered the picture during supper, and being very expert in drawing, and not less happy in taking likenesses, I had no difficulty in giving to my shade the superficial resemblance you have perceived, because the Marquis's features are very striking." "But the figure seemed to move?" "It appeared so; yet it was not the figure, but the smoke which received its light." "And the man who fell down in the chimney spoke for the apparition?" "He did." "But he could not hear your questions distinctly." "There was no occasion for it. Your Highness will recollect, that I ordered you all very strictly not to propose any question yourselves to the apparition. My enquiries and his answers were preconcerted between us; and that no mistake might happen, I caused him to speak at long intervals, which he counted by the beating of a watch." "You ordered the innkeeper carefully to extinguish every fire in the house. This was undoubtedly —" "To save the man from the danger of being smothered; because the chimneys in the house communicate with each other, and I did not think myself very secure from your retinue."

"How did it happen," asked Lord Seymour, "that your ghost appeared neither sooner nor later than you wished him?" "The ghost was in the room for some time before I called him; but while the room was lighted, the shade was too faint to be perceived. When the formula of the conjuration was finished, I caused the cover of the box, in which the spirit was burning, to drop down; the hall was darkened, and it was not till then that the figure on the wall could be distinctly seen, although it had been reflected there a considerable time before." "When the ghost appeared, we all felt an electrical stroke. How was that managed?" "You have discovered the machine under the altar. You have also seen, that I was standing upon a silk carpet. I ordered you to form a half moon around me, and to take hold of each other's hand. When the crisis approached, I gave a sign to one of you to seize me by the

hair. The silver crucifix was the conductor; and you felt the electrical shock when I touched it with my hand."

"You ordered Count O—— and myself," continued Lord Seymour, "to hold two naked swords across over your head, during the whole time of the conjuration; for what purpose?" "For no other than to engage your attention during the operation; because I distrusted you two the most. You remember, that I expressly commanded you to hold the swords one inch above my head; by confining you exactly to this distance, I prevented you from looking where I did not wish you. I had not then perceived my principal enemy."

"I own," said Lord Seymour, "you acted cautiously; but why were we obliged to appear undressed?" "Merely to give a greater solemnity to the scene, and to fill your imaginations with the idea of something extraordinary." "The second apparition prevented your ghost from speaking," said the Prince; "what should we have learned from him?" "Nearly the same as what you heard afterwards. It was not without design that I asked your Highness whether you had told me every thing that the deceased communicated to you, and whether you had made any further enquiries on this subject in his country? I thought this was necessary, in order to prevent the deposition of the ghost from being contradicted by facts that you were previously acquainted with. Knowing likewise that every man, especially in his youth, is liable to error, I enquired whether the life of your friend had been irreproachable, and on your answer I founded that of the ghost."

"Your explanation of this matter is in some measure satisfactory," said the Prince; "but there remains yet one material circumstance which I must insist upon being cleared up." "If it be in my power, and——" "I shall not listen to any conditions. Justice, into whose hands you are fallen, ought not, perhaps, to deal with you so delicately. Who was the man at whose feet we saw you fall? What do you know of him? How did you get acquainted with him? and what do you know of the second apparition?" "Your Highness ——" "Hesitate not a moment. Recollect, that on looking at the Russian officer attentively, you

screamed aloud, and fell on your knees before him. What are we to understand by that?" "That man, my Prince——" He stopped, grew visibly pale and perplexed, and, looking around him with an awful trepidation—"Yes, your Highness," he continued, "that man is a terrible being." "What do you know of him? What connection have you with him? Do not conceal the truth from us." "I will not; but—I am not certain that he is not among us at this very moment?"

"Where? Who?" exclaimed we all together, looking fearfully about the room. "It is impossible." "That man, or whatever else he may be, is a being incomprehensible; all things seem possible for him to do." "Who is he? Whence does he come? Is he Armenian or Russian? Of the characters he assumes, which is his real one?" "He is not what he appears to be. There are few conditions or countries in which he has not worn the mask. No person knows who he is, whence he comes, or whither he goes. Some say he has been for a long time in Egypt, and that he has brought from thence, out of a catacomb, his occult sciences. Here we only know him by the name of the Incomprehensible. How old, for instance, do you think he is?" "To judge from his appearance, he can scarcely have passed forty." "And of what age do you suppose I am?" "Not far from fifty." "Well; and I must tell you, that I was but a boy of seventeen when my grandfather spoke to me of this extraordinary man, whom he had seen at Famagusta; at which time he appeared nearly of the same age as he does at present." "Impossible," said the Prince; "it is ridiculous, and incredible."

"By no means, sir. Were I not prevented by these fetters, I could produce vouchers that would readily confirm my assertion. There are several credible persons who remember having seen him, each at the same time, in different parts of the globe. No sword can wound—no poison hurt—no fire burn him—no vessel in which he embarks can be shipwrecked or sunk: time itself seems to have no influence over him; years do not affect his constitution, nor age whiten his hair. He was never seen

to take any food. He is a stranger to love. No sleep closes his eyes. Of the twenty-four hours in the day, there is only one which he cannot command, during which no person ever saw him, and during which he never was employed in any terrestrial occupation."

"And this hour is—"

"That of midnight. When the clock strikes twelve, he ceases to belong to the living. In whatever place he is, he must immediately be gone; whatever business he is engaged in, he must instantly leave it. That dreadful hour tears him from the arms of friendship, hurries him from the sacred altar, and would, even in the agonies of death, drag him from his bed. His haunt has never been discovered, nor his engagements at that hour known. No person ventures to interrogate, and still less to follow him. As the time approaches, his features are enveloped in the gloom of melancholy, and are so terrifying that no person has courage to look him in the face or to speak a word to him. However lively the conversation may have been, a dead silence immediately succeeds it, and all around him wait for his return in awful horror, without venturing to quit their seats, or to open the door through which he has passed."

"Does nothing extraordinary appear in his person when he returns?" "Nothing, except that he seems pale and languid, nearly in the state of a man who has just suffered a painful operation, or received disastrous intelligence. Some pretend to have seen drops of blood on his linen, but with what degree of veracity I cannot affirm." "Did no person ever attempt to conceal the approach of this hour from him, or endeavour to engage him in such diversions as might make him forget it?" "Once only, it is said, he passed the fatal hour. The company was numerous, and remained together until late at night. All the clocks and watches were purposely set wrong, and the warmth of conversation diverted his attention. When the moment arrived, he suddenly became silent and motionless; his limbs continued in the position in which this instant had arrested them; his eyes were fixed, his pulse ceased to beat; all the means employed to awake him proved fruitless, and this situation endured till the hour had

elapsed ; he then revived on a sudden, and continued his speech from the same syllable that he was pronouncing at the moment of interruption. The general consternation discovered to him what had happened ; and he declared, with an awful solemnity, that they ought to think themselves happy in having escaped with no other injury than fear. The same night he quitted for ever the place where this circumstance had occurred. The common opinion is, that during this mysterious hour he converses with his attendant spirits. Some even suppose him to be one of the departed, who is allowed to pass twenty-three hours of the day among the living, and that in the twenty-fourth his soul is obliged to return to the infernal regions to suffer its punishment. Some believe him to be the famous Apollonius of Tyana*, and others the disciple of St. John the Baptist, of whom it is said that he shall remain wandering on the earth until the day of judgment."

"A character so wonderful," replied the Prince, "cannot fail to give rise to extraordinary conjectures. But all this you profess to know only by hearsay ; and yet his behaviour to you, and yours to him, seemed to indicate a more intimate acquaintance. Is it not founded upon some particular event, in which yourself have been concerned ? Conceal nothing from us." The Sicilian remained silent, as if uncertain whether he should speak or not. "If it concern any thing," said the Prince, "that you do not

* Apollonius, a Pythagorean philosopher, was born at Tyana, in Cappadocia, about three or four years before the birth of Christ. At sixteen years of age he became a strict observer of Pythagorean rules, renouncing wine, women, and all sorts of flesh ; not wearing shoes, letting his hair grow, and clothing himself with nothing but linen. He soon after set up for a reformer of mankind, and chose his habitation in the temple of Æsculapius, where he is said to have performed many miraculous cures. On his coming of age, he gave part of his wealth to his eldest brother, distributed another part to some poor relations, and kept very little for himself. There are numberless fabulous stories recounted of him. He went five years without speaking, and yet, during this time, he stopped many seditions in Cilicia and Pamphylia. He travelled, set up for a legislator, and gave out that he understood all languages without having ever learned them. He could tell the thoughts of men, and understood the oracles which birds delivered by their singing. The Heathens opposed the pretended miracles of this man to those of our Saviour, and gave the preference to this philosopher. After having for a long time imposed upon the world, and gained a great number of disciples, he died in a very advanced age about the end of the first century. His life, which is filled with absurdities, was written by Philostratus ; and M. du Pin has published a confutation of Apollonius's life, in which he proves, that the miracles of this pretended philosopher carry strong marks of falsehood, and that there is not one which may not be ascribed to chance or artifice. Apollonius himself wrote some works which are now lost.

wish to publish, I promise you by my honour, and before these gentlemen, the most inviolable secrecy; but speak openly, and without reserve." "Could I hope," answered the prisoner at last, "that you would not produce these gentlemen as evidence against me, I would tell you a remarkable adventure of this Armenian, to which I myself was witness, and which will leave you no doubt of his supernatural powers. But I beg leave to conceal some names." "Cannot you do it without this condition?" "No, your Highness: there is a family concerned in it which I must respect." "Let us hear then."

"Above five years ago, being at Naples, where I practised my art with success, I became acquainted with a person of the name of Lorenzo del M——, chevalier of the order of St. Stephen; a young and rich nobleman of one of the first families in the kingdom, who loaded me with civilities, and seemed to have a great esteem for my occult science. He told me that the Marquis del M——, his father, was a zealous admirer of the cabbala*, and would think himself happy in having a philosopher like me (for such he was pleased to call me) under his roof. The Marquis resided in one of his country seats on the sea-shore, about seven miles from Naples; and there, almost entirely secluded from the world, he mourned the loss of a beloved son, of whom he had been deprived by a fatal and melancholy accident. The chevalier gave me to understand, that he and his family might perhaps have occasion to employ my secret arts in obtaining some very important intelligence, to procure which every natural means had been exhausted in vain. He added, with a very significant look, that he himself might at some future period consider me as

* Cabbala is properly a mysterious kind of science delivered by revelation to the ancient Jews, and transmitted by oral tradition to those of our times; serving for the interpretation of difficult passages in Scripture, and to discover future events by the combination of particular words, letters, and numbers. It is likewise termed the oral law. But Cabbala, among the Christians, is also applied to the use, or rather abuse, which visionaries and enthusiasts make of Scripture for discovering futurity, by the study and consideration of the combination of certain words, letters, and numbers in the sacred writings. All the words, terms, magic characters, or figures, with stones and talismans, numbers, letters, charms, &c. in magic operations, are comprised under this species of Cabbala; and the word is used for any kind of magic, on account of the resemblance this art bears to the Jewish Cabbala. The Jews, however, never use the word in any such sense, but always with the utmost respect and veneration.

the author of all his earthly happiness. I did not choose to press him for an explanation. The affair was as follows :—Lorenzo, being the youngest son of the Marquis, had been destined for the church. The family estates were to devolve to the eldest. Jeronymo, which was the name of the latter, had spent many years on his travels, and returned to his country about seven years prior to the event which I am about to relate, in order to celebrate his marriage with the only daughter of a neighbouring count. This marriage had been determined on by the parents during the infancy of the children, in order to unite the very large fortunes of the two houses. But though this agreement was made by the two families without consulting the hearts of the parties concerned, the latter had secretly entertained an affection for each other. Jeronymo del M—— and Antonia C—— had been always brought up together; and the little constraint imposed on two children, whom their parents were already accustomed to regard as united, soon produced between them a connection of the tenderest kind. The congeniality of their tempers cemented this intimacy, and in riper years it matured insensibly into love. An absence of four years, far from cooling this passion, had only served to inflame it; and Jeronymo returned to the arms of his intended bride as faithful and as ardent as if they had never been separated. The raptures occasioned by his return had not subsided, nor the preparations for the happy day discontinued, when Jeronymo disappeared. He used frequently to pass the afternoon in a summer-house which commanded a prospect of the sea, and was accustomed to take the diversion of sailing on the water. One day, when he was at his favourite retirement, it was observed that he remained a much longer time than usual without returning, and his friends began to be very uneasy on his account. Boats were despatched after him, vessels were sent to sea in quest of him—no person had seen him—none of his servants could have attended him, for none of them were absent—night came on, and he did not appear. The next morning dawned—the day passed—the evening succeeded—Jeronymo came not. Already had they begun to give themselves up to the most melancholy

conjectures, when the news arrived that an Algerine pirate had landed the preceding day on that coast, and carried off several of the inhabitants. Two galleys, ready equipped, were immediately ordered to sea. The old Marquis himself embarked in one of them, to attempt the deliverance of his son at the peril of his own life. On the third day they perceived the corsair. The wind was favourable—they were just about to overtake him, and even approached so near to him, that Lorenzo, who was in one of the galleys, fancied that he saw, upon the deck of the adversary's ship, a signal made by his brother—when a sudden storm separated the vessels. Hardly could the almost shipwrecked galleys sustain the fury of the tempest. The pirate, in the mean time, had disappeared, and the distressed state of the other vessels obliged them to put into Malta. The affliction of the family was beyond all bounds. The distracted old Marquis tore his grey hairs in the utmost violence of grief; and the life of the young Countess was despaired of.

“ Five years were consumed after this event in fruitless enquiries; diligent search was made all along the coast of Barbary; and immense sums were offered for the ransom of the young Marquis, but to no purpose. The only conjecture founded on probability was, that the same storm which had separated the galleys from the pirate had destroyed the latter vessel, and that the whole ship's company had perished in the waves. But this supposition, however probable, as it did not by any means amount to a certainty, could not authorise the family to renounce the hope that the absent Jeronymo might again appear. In case, however, that he did not, either the family's name must be suffered to perish, or the youngest son must relinquish the church, and enter into the rights of the eldest. Justice seemed to oppose the latter measure; and, on the other hand, the necessity of preserving the family from annihilation required that the scruple should not be carried too far. In the mean time, sorrow, added to the weight of age, was bringing the Marquis fast to his grave. Every unsuccessful attempt served to increase his distress, and diminish the hope of finding his lost son. He saw that his name

might be perpetuated by acting with a little injustice, in consenting to favour his younger son at the expense of the elder. The fulfilment of his agreement with Count C—— required only the change of a name ; for the object of the two families was equally accomplished, whether Antonia became the wife of Lorenzo or Jeronymo. The faint probability of the latter's appearing again weighed but little against the certain and pressing danger of the total extinction of the family ; and the old Marquis, who considered his dissolution fast approaching, ardently wished to die free from this inquietude. Lorenzo alone, who was to be principally benefited by this measure, opposed it with the greatest obstinacy. He resisted with equal firmness the allurements of an immense fortune, and the attractions of a beautiful and accomplished object ready to be delivered into his arms. He refused, on principles the most generous and conscientious, to invade the rights of a brother, who for any thing he knew might himself be in a capacity to resume them.

“ ‘ Is not the lot of my Jeronymo,’ said he, ‘ made sufficiently miserable by the horrors of a long captivity, without the aggravation of being deprived for ever of all that he holds most dear ? With what conscience could I supplicate Heaven for his return, when his wife is in my arms ? With what countenance could I meet him, if at last he should be restored to us by a miracle ? And even supposing that he is torn from us for ever, can we honour his memory better than by keeping constantly open the chasm which his death has caused in our circle ? Can we better show our respects to him than by sacrificing our dearest hopes upon his tomb, and keeping untouched, as a sacred deposit, what was peculiarly his own ?’ But these arguments of fraternal delicacy could not reconcile the old Marquis to the idea of being obliged to witness the decay of a tree which nine centuries had beheld flourishing. All that Lorenzo could obtain was a delay of two years. During this period they continued their enquiries with the utmost diligence. Lorenzo himself made several voyages, and exposed his person to many dangers. No trouble, no ex-

pense, was spared to recover the lost Jeronymo. These two years, however, like those which preceded them, were consumed in vain."

"And Antonia," said the Prince.—"You tell us nothing of her. Could she so calmly submit to her fate? I cannot suppose it."

"Antonia," answered the Sicilian, "experienced the most violent struggle between duty and inclination, between dislike and admiration. The disinterested generosity of a brother affected her. She felt herself forced to esteem a person whom she could never love. Her heart, torn by contrary sentiments, felt the bitterest distress; but her repugnance to the chevalier seemed to increase in the same degree as his claims upon her esteem augmented. Lorenzo perceived with heartfelt sorrow the secret grief that consumed her youth. An unconquerable sympathy for her misfortune insensibly eradicated that indifference with which till then Lorenzo had been accustomed to consider her. But this delusive sentiment deceived him, and an ungovernable passion began rapidly to shake the steadiness of his virtue, which till then had been unequalled. He, however, still obeyed the dictates of generosity, though at the expense of his love. By his efforts alone was the unfortunate victim protected against the cruel and arbitrary proceedings of the rest of the family. But his endeavours were ineffectual. Every victory he gained over his passion rendered him more worthy of Antonia; and the disinterestedness with which he refused her, left her without an apology for resistance. Thus were affairs situated, when the chevalier engaged me to visit him at his father's villa. The earnest recommendation of my patron procured me a reception which exceeded my most sanguine wishes. I must not forget to mention, that, by some remarkable operations, I had previously rendered my name famous in different lodges of free-masons. This circumstance perhaps contributed to strengthen the old Marquis's confidence in me, and to heighten his expectations. I beg you will excuse me from describing particularly the lengths I went with him, or the means which I employed. You may form some judgment of them from what I have before confessed to you. Profit-

ing by the mystic books which I found in his very extensive library, I was soon able to speak to him in his own language, and to adorn my system of the invisible world with the most extraordinary inventions. He was therefore with so little difficulty induced to credit the fables I taught him, that in a short time he would have believed as implicitly in the secret commerce of philosophers and sylphs as in any article of the canon. The Marquis, being very religious, had acquired in the school of theology a facility of belief, which caused him at once to be fascinated with the stories I told him, and to put the most unreserved confidence in my character. At length I entangled him so completely in mystery, that he would no longer believe any thing that was natural. In short, I became the adored apostle of the house. The usual subject of my lectures was the exaltation of human nature, and the intercourse of men with superior things; the infallible Count Gabolis* was my oracle. Antonia, whose mind since the loss of her lover had been more occupied in the world of spirits than in that of nature, and who had a strong tincture of melancholy in her composition, caught every hint I gave her with a fearful satisfaction. Even the servants contrived to have some business in the room when I was speaking, and, seizing part of my conversation, formed from it mysterious presages.—Two months were passed in this manner at the Marquis's villa, when the chevalier one morning entered my apartment. His features had experienced a considerable alteration, and from his sorrowful countenance I suspected that something preyed upon his mind.—He threw himself upon a couch with every symptom of despair.

“ ‘I am distracted, ruined,’ said he; ‘I must, I cannot support it any longer.’ ‘What is the matter with you, chevalier?’ ‘What has befallen you?’ ‘Oh! this terrible passion!’ said he, starting from his seat, and throwing himself into my arms. ‘I have combated against it like a man, but can resist it no longer.’ ‘And whose fault is it but your own, my dear chevalier? Are they not all willing to gratify this passion? Your father? Your relations?’ ‘My father! my relations! What are they to me? I want

* A mystical work written in French by the Abbé de Villars.

not to be united to her by force. 'Have not I a rival? Alas! and what a rival! Perhaps a dead one! Oh! let me go, let me go to the end of the world; I must find my brother.' 'What! after so many unsuccessful attempts, have you still any hope?' 'Hope! Alas, no! It has long since been banished from my heart, but it has not from hers; of what consequence are my sentiments? Is it possible that I should be happy whilst there remains a gleam of hope in Antonia's breast. Two words, my friend, would end my torments, but in vain; my destiny must continue to be miserable, till eternity shall break its long silence, and the grave shall speak in my behalf.' 'Is it then a state of certainty that would render you happy?' 'Happy! Alas! I doubt whether I shall ever be happy again; but uncertainty is of all others the most dreadful affliction.'

"After a short interval of silence, he continued with an emotion less violent:—'If he could see my torments! Surely a constancy which renders his brother miserable cannot add to his happiness! Can it be just, that the living should suffer so much for the sake of the dead; that I should fruitlessly pine for an object which Jeronymo can no longer enjoy? If he knew the pangs I suffer,' (said he, concealing his face while the tears streamed from his eyes,) 'perhaps he himself would conduct her to my arms.' 'But is there no possibility of gratifying your wishes?' He started! 'What do you say, my friend?' 'Less important occasions than the present,' said I, 'have disturbed the repose of the dead for the sake of the living; is not the terrestrial happiness of a man, of a brother—' 'The terrestrial happiness! Ah, my friend, I feel but too sensibly the force of your expression—my entire felicity!' 'And the tranquillity of a distressed family, are not these sufficient to justify such a measure? If any sublunary concern can authorise us to interrupt the peace of the blessed, to make use of a power—' 'For God's sake, my friend!' said he, interrupting me, 'no more of this—once, I avow it, I had such a thought; I think I mentioned it to you; but I have long since rejected it as horrid and abominable.'

"You will have conjectured already," continued the Sicilian, "to what this conversation led us; I endeavoured

to overcome the scruples of the chevalier, and at last succeeded.—We resolved to call the ghost of the deceased Jeronymo; I only stipulated for a delay of a fortnight, in order, as I pretended, to prepare, in a suitable manner, for an act so solemn.—The time being expired, and my machinery in readiness, I took advantage of a very gloomy day, when we were all assembled as usual, to communicate the affair to the family; and not only brought them to consent to it, but even to make it a subject of their own request.—The most difficult part of the task was to obtain the approbation of Antonia, whose presence was essential.—My endeavours were, however, greatly assisted by the melancholy turn of her mind, and perhaps still more so by a faint hope that Jeronymo might still be living, and therefore would not appear.—A want of confidence in the thing itself was the only obstacle which I had to remove.—Having obtained the consent of the family, the third day was fixed on for the operation; I prepared then for the solemn transaction, by mystical instruction, fasting, solitude, and prayers, which I ordered to be continued till late in the night.—Much use was also made of a certain musical instrument*, unknown till that time; and, in such cases, it has often been found very powerful.—The effect of these artifices was so much beyond my expectation, that the enthusiasm which on this occasion I was obliged to show, was infinitely heightened by that of my audience.—The long-expected moment at last arrived.”

“I guess,” said the Prince, “whom you are now going to introduce.—But go on, go on.” “Your Highness is mistaken.—The deception succeeded according to my wishes.” “How! Where then is the Armenian?” “Your Highness’s patience: he will appear but too soon. I omit the description of the juggling farce itself, as it would be too tedious to relate.—It is sufficient to say, that it answered my expectation; the old Marquis, the young Countess, her mother, Lorenzo, and several other persons of the family were present.—You will imagine, that during my long residence in the house I took all opportunities of gathering information respecting every thing that concerned the deceased.—Seve-

* The *Æolian harp*.

ral of his portraits enabled me to give the apparition a striking likeness ; and as I suffered the ghost to speak only by signs, that the sound of his voice might excite no suspicion, the departed Jeronymo appeared in the dress of a Moorish slave, with a deep wound in his neck. — You observe, that in this respect I was counteracting the general supposition that he had perished in the waves. I had reason to hope, that this unexpected circumstance would heighten the belief in the apparition itself ; for nothing appeared to me more dangerous than to be too natural.”

“ I think you judged well,” said the Prince ; “ in whatever respects apparitions, the most probable is the least acceptable. If their communications are easily comprehended, we undervalue the channel by which they are obtained ; nay, we even suspect the reality of the miracle, if the discoveries which it brings to light are such as might easily have been imagined. — Why should we disturb the repose of a spirit, to inform us of nothing more than the ordinary powers of the intellect are capable of teaching us ? — But, on the other hand, if the intelligence which we receive be extraordinary and unexpected, it confirms, in some degree, the miracle by which it is obtained ; for who can doubt an operation to be supernatural, when its effect could not be produced by natural means ? I have interrupted you,” added the Prince : “ proceed in your narrative.” “ I asked the ghost, whether there was any thing in this world which he still considered as his own, and whether he had left any thing behind that was particularly dear to him ? The ghost thrice shook his head, and lifted up his hands towards heaven. Previous to his retiring, he dropped a ring from his finger, which was found on the floor after he had disappeared ; Antonia took it, and, looking at it attentively, she knew it to be the wedding-ring she had presented to her intended husband.”

“ The wedding-ring ! ” exclaimed the Prince, with surprise. “ How did you get it ? ” “ Who ? — I ! — It was not the true one ! — I procured it. — It was only a counterfeit.” “ A counterfeit ! ” repeated the Prince. “ But in order to counterfeit, you must have been in possession of the true one. How did you come at it ? Surely the

deceased never went without it." "That is true," replied the Sicilian, apparently confused. "But, from a description which was given me of the original wedding-ring —" "A description which was given you! by whom?" "Long before that time. It was a plain gold ring, and had, I believe, the name of the young Countess engraved on it. But you make me lose the connection."

"What happened farther?" said the Prince, with a very dissatisfied countenance. "The family fancied themselves convinced that Jeronymo was no more. From that very day they publicly announced his death, and went into mourning. The circumstance of the ring left no doubt even in the mind of Antonia, and added a considerable weight to the addresses of the chevalier. In the mean time, the violent impression which the young Countess had received from the sight of the apparition brought on her a disorder so dangerous, that the hopes of Lorenzo were very near being destroyed for ever. On her recovering, she insisted upon taking the veil; and it was only by the serious remonstrances of her confessor, in whom she placed an implicit confidence, that she was brought to abandon her project. At length, the united solicitations of the family, aided by the confessor, wrested from her the desired consent. The last day of mourning was fixed on for the day of marriage, and the old Marquis determined to add to the solemnity of the occasion, by resigning all his estates to his lawful heir. The day arrived, and Lorenzo received his trembling bride at the altar. In the evening, a splendid banquet was prepared for the guests, in a hall superbly illuminated. The most lively and delightful music contributed to increase the general joy of the assembly. The venerable Marquis wished all the world to participate in his felicity. The gates of the palace were thrown open, and every one that came in was joyfully welcomed. In the midst of the throng——"

The Sicilian paused — a trembling expectation suspended our breath. "In the midst of the throng," continued the prisoner, "appeared a Franciscan monk, to whom my attention was directed by a person who sat next to me at table. He was standing motionless like a marble

pillar. His shape was tall and thin; his face pale and ghastly; his aspect grave and mournful; and his eyes were fixed on the new-married couple. The joy which beamed on the face of every one present, appeared not on his. His countenance never once varied. He seemed like a statue among living persons. Such an object, appearing amidst the general joy, struck me more forcibly from its contrast with every thing around me. It left on my mind so durable an impression, that from it alone I have been enabled (which would otherwise have been impossible) to recollect in the Russian officer the features of this Franciscan monk; for without doubt you must have already conceived, that the person I have described was no other than your Armenian. I frequently attempted to withdraw my eyes from this figure, but they returned involuntarily, and found him always unaltered. I pointed him out to the person who sat nearest to me on the other side, and he did the same to the person next to him. In a few minutes, a general curiosity and astonishment pervaded the whole company. The conversation languished; a general silence succeeded; nor did the monk interrupt it. He continued motionless, and always the same; his grave and mournful looks constantly fixed upon the new-married couple:—His appearance struck every one with terror. The young Countess alone, who found the transcript of her own sorrow in the face of the stranger, beheld with a sullen satisfaction the only object that seemed to sympathise in her sufferings. The crowd insensibly diminished, for it was past midnight. The music became faint and languid; the tapers grew dim, and many of them went out. The conversation, declining by degrees, lost itself at last in secret murmurs, and the faintly illuminated hall was nearly deserted. The monk, in the mean time, continued motionless, his grave and mournful look still fixed on the new-married couple. The company at length rose from the table. The guests dispersed. The family assembled in a separate group, and the monk, though uninvited, continued near them. How it happened that no person spoke to him, I cannot conceive. The female friends now surrounded the trembling bride, who cast a

supplicating and distressed look on the awful stranger; but he did not answer it. The gentlemen assembled in the same manner around the bridegroom. A solemn and anxious silence prevailed among them.

“ At length — ‘ How happy we are here together !’ said the old Marquis, who alone seemed not to behold the stranger, or at least seemed to behold him without dismay. — ‘ How happy we are here together ! and yet my son Jeronymo cannot be with us !’ ‘ Have you not invited him, and did not he answer your invitation ?’ asked the monk. It was the first time he had spoken. We looked at him alarmed. ‘ Alas ! he is gone to a place whence there is no return,’ answered the old man. ‘ Reverend father, you misunderstood me ; — my son Jeronymo is dead.’ ‘ Perhaps he only fears to appear in this company,’ replied the monk. ‘ Who knows how your son Jeronymo may be situated ? Let him now hear the voice which he heard the last. Desire your son Lorenzo to call him.’ ‘ What does he mean ?’ whispered the company one to another.

“ Lorenzo changed colour. My own hair almost stood erect on my head. In the mean time the monk approached a sideboard. He took a glass of wine, and bringing it to his lips, — ‘ To the memory of our dear Jeronymo,’ said he : ‘ every one who loved the deceased will follow my example.’ ‘ Wherever you come from, reverend father,’ exclaimed the old Marquis, ‘ you have pronounced a dearly beloved name, and you are welcome here ;’ then turning to us, he offered us full glasses — ‘ Come, my friends ! let us not be surpassed by a stranger. The memory of my son Jeronymo !’ Never, I believe, was any toast less heartily received. ‘ There is one glass left,’ said the Marquis. ‘ Why does my son Lorenzo refuse to pay this friendly tribute ?’ Lorenzo tremblingly received the glass from the hands of the monk, — tremblingly he put it to his lips. — ‘ My dearly beloved brother Jeronymo !’ The name trembled on his tongue, and, being seized with horror, he replaced the glass unemptied. ‘ That is the voice of my murderer !’ exclaimed a terrible figure, which appeared instantaneously in the midst of us, covered with blood, and disfigured with horrible wounds.

"But ask nothing further from me," added the Sicilian, with every symptom of horror in his countenance. "I lost my senses the moment I looked at this apparition. The same happened to every one present. When we recovered, the monk and the ghost had disappeared. Lorenzo was in the agonies of death. He was carried to bed in the most dreadful convulsions. No person attended him but his confessor and the sorrowful old Marquis, in whose presence he expired; — the Marquis died a few weeks after him. Lorenzo's secret is concealed in the bosom of the priest who received his last confession, and no person ever learned what it was. Soon after this event, a deep well was cleaned in the farm yard of the Marquis's villa. It had been disused many years, and the mouth of it was almost closed up by shrubs and old trees. A skeleton was found among the rubbish. The house where this happened is now no more; the family del M—— is extinct, and Antonia's tomb may be seen in a convent not far from Salerno."

Astonishment kept us silent. "You see," continued the Sicilian, "how my acquaintance with the Russian officer, Armenian or Franciscan friar, has originated. Judge whether I had not cause to tremble at the sight of a being who has twice placed himself in my way in a manner so terrible." "I beg you will answer me one question more," said the Prince, rising from his seat; "Have you been sincere in your account of the chevalier?" "Yes, your Highness, to the best of my knowledge." "You really believe him to be an honest man?" "I do, by heaven! I believe him to be an honest man." "Even at the time that he gave you the ring?" "How! he gave me no ring. I did not say that he gave me the ring."

"Very well!" said the Prince, pulling the bell, and preparing to depart. "And you believe" (going back to the prisoner) "that the ghost of the Marquis de Lanoy, which the Russian officer introduced after your apparition, was a real ghost?" "I cannot think otherwise." "Let us go!" said the Prince, addressing himself to us. The gaoler came in. "We have done," said the Prince to him. "As for you," turning to the prisoner, "you shall hear farther from me." "I am tempted to ask your High-

ness the last question you proposed to the conjurer," said I to the Prince, when we were alone. "Do you believe the second ghost to have been a real one?" "I believe it! No, not now, most assuredly." "Not now? Then you did once believe it." "I confess I was tempted for a moment to believe it to have been something more than the contrivance of a juggler; and I could wish to see the man, who under similar circumstances would not have formed the same supposition." "But what reason have you for altering your opinion? What the prisoner has related of the Armenian, ought to increase rather than diminish your belief in his supernatural powers."

"What this wretch has related of him!" said the Prince, interrupting me very gravely. "I hope," continued he, "you have not now any doubt that we have had to do with a villain." "No; but must his evidence on that account—" "The evidence of a villain! Suppose I had no other reason for doubt, the evidence of such a person can be of no weight against common sense and established truth. Does a man who has already deceived me several times, and whose trade it is to deceive, does he deserve to be heard in a cause in which the unsupported testimony of even the most sincere adherent to truth could not be received? Ought we to believe a man who perhaps never once spoke truth for its own sake? Does such a man deserve credit, when he appears as evidence against human reason and the eternal laws of nature? Would it not be as absurd as to admit the accusation of a person notoriously infamous against unblemished and reproachless innocence?" "But what motives could he have for giving so great a character to a man whom he has so many reasons to hate?" "I am not to conclude that he can have no motives for doing this, because I am unable to comprehend them? Do I know who has bribed him to deceive me? I confess I cannot penetrate through the mystery of this plan; but he has certainly done a material injury to the cause he contends for, by showing himself at least an impostor, and perhaps something worse." "The circumstance of the ring, I allow, appears suspicious."

"It is more than suspicious; it is decisive. He received

this ring from the murderer. Let us even suppose the circumstances he has related are true ; at the moment he received it, he must have been certain that it was from the perpetrator of the murder. Who but the assassin could have taken from Jeronymo's finger a ring, which he undoubtedly never was without ? Throughout the whole of his narration, the Sicilian has laboured to persuade us, that while he was endeavouring to deceive Lorenzo, Lorenzo was in reality deceiving him. Would he have had recourse to this subterfuge, if he had not been sensible that he should lose much of our confidence, by confessing himself an accomplice with the assassin ? The whole story is visibly nothing but a series of impostures, invented merely to connect the few truths he has thought proper to give us. Ought I then to hesitate in disbelieving the eleventh assertion of a person who has already deceived me ten times, rather than admit a violation of the fundamental laws of nature, which I have ever found in the most perfect harmony ?" " I have nothing to reply to all this ; but the apparition we saw is to me not the less incomprehensible." " It is also incomprehensible to me, although I have been tempted to find a key to it." " How ?" " Do not you recollect that the second apparition, as soon as he entered, walked directly up to the altar, took the crucifix in his hand, and placed himself upon the carpet ?" " It appeared so to me." " And this crucifix, according to the Sicilian's confession, was a conductor. You see, that the apparition hastened to make himself electrical. Thus the blow which Lord Seymour struck him with his sword, must of necessity be ineffectual, the electric stroke having disabled his arm." " That is true with respect to the sword. But the pistol fired by the Sicilian, the ball of which rolled slowly upon the altar—" " Are you convinced that this was the same ball which was fired from the pistol ? Not to mention that the puppet, or the man who represented the ghost, may have been so well accoutred as to be invulnerable by swords or bullets ; but consider who had loaded the pistols."

" True," said I ; and a sudden light darted into my mind. " The Russian officer had loaded them, but it was

in our presence. How could he have deceived us?" "Why should he not have deceived us? Did you suspect him sufficiently to observe him? Did you examine the ball before it was put into the pistol? It may have been one of quicksilver or clay. Did you take notice whether the Russian officer really put it into the barrel, or dropped it into his other hand? But supposing that he actually loaded the pistols, how can you be sure that he did not leave them behind him, and take some unloaded ones into the room where the ghost appeared. He might very easily have exchanged them while we were undressing. No person ever thought of noticing him in particular. It is very possible, too, that the figure, at the moment when we were prevented from seeing it by the smoke of the pistol, might have dropped another ball on the altar. Which of these conjectures is impossible?" "Your Highness is right. But that striking resemblance to your deceased friend! I have often seen him with you, and I immediately recognised him in the apparition." "I did the same, and I must confess the illusion was complete; but as the juggler, from a few secret glances at the snuff-box, was able to give to his apparition such a likeness as deceived us both, what was to prevent the Russian officer (who had used the box during the whole time of supper, who had liberty to observe the picture unnoticed, and to whom I had discovered in confidence the person it represented) from doing the same? Add to this, what has been before observed by the Sicilian, that the prominent features of the Marquis were so striking as to be easily imitated. What now remains to be explained respecting the second ghost?" "The words he uttered, the information he gave you about your friend." "What! Did not the juggler assure us, that from the little which he had learned from me, he had composed a similar story? Does not this prove that the invention was obvious and natural? Beside, the answers of the ghost, like those of an oracle, were so obscure, that he was in no danger of being detected in a falsehood. If the man who personated the ghost possessed sagacity and presence of mind, and knew ever so little of the affairs on which he was consulted, to what length might he not have carried the deception?"

“ I beg your Highness to consider, how much preparation such a complicated artifice would have required from the Armenian ; what a time it requires to paint a face with sufficient exactness ; what a time would have been requisite to instruct the pretended ghost, so as to guard him against gross errors ; what a degree of minute attention to regulate every attendant or adventitious circumstance which might be useful or detrimental. And remember, that the Russian officer was absent but half an hour. Was that short space sufficient to make even such arrangements as were indispensably necessary ? Surely not. Even a dramatic writer, who has the least desire to preserve the three unities of Aristotle, durst not venture to load the interval between one act and another with such a variety of actions, or to suppose in his audience such a facility of belief.” “ What ! You think it absolutely impossible that every necessary preparation should have been made in the space of half an hour.” “ Indeed, I look upon it as almost impossible.” “ I do not understand this expression. Does it militate against the laws of time and space, or of matter and motion, that a man so ingenious and so expert as this Armenian must necessarily be, assisted by agents whose dexterity and acuteness are probably not inferior to his own, provided with such means and instruments as a man of this profession is never without ; is it impossible that such a man, favoured by such circumstances, should effect so much in so short a time ? Is it absurd to suppose, that by a very small number of words or signs, he can convey to his assistants very extensive commissions, and direct very complex operations ? Nothing ought to be admitted against the established laws of nature, unless it is something with which these laws are absolutely incompatible. Would you rather give credit to a miracle than admit an improbability ? Would you solve a difficulty rather by overturning the powers of nature, than by believing an artful and uncommon combination of them ? ”

“ Though the fact will not justify a conclusion such as you have condemned, you must grant that it is far beyond our conception.” “ I am almost tempted to dispute even this,” said the Prince, with a sarcastic smile. “ What would you

say, my dear Count, if it should be proved, for instance, that the operations of the Armenian were prepared and carried on not only during the half hour that he was absent from us, not only in haste and incidentally, but during the whole evening and the whole night? You recollect that the Sicilian employed near three hours in preparation." "The Sicilian, your Highness!" "And how will you convince me that this juggler had not as much concern in the second apparition as in the first?" "How!" "That he was not the principal assistant of the Armenian; in a word, how will you convince me that they did not co-operate?" "It would be a difficult task to prove that they did," exclaimed I, with no little surprise.

"Not so difficult, my dear Count, as you imagine. What! could it have happened by mere chance that these two men should form a design so extraordinary and so complicated upon the same person, at the same time, and in the same place? Could mere chance have produced such an exact harmony between their operations, that one of them should appear as if subservient to the other? Suppose the Armenian has intended to heighten the effect of his deception, by introducing it after a less refined one; that he has created a Hector to make himself an Achilles. Suppose he has done all this, to see what degree of credulity he should find in me; to examine the avenues to my confidence; to familiarise himself with his subject by an attempt that might have miscarried without any prejudice to his plan; in a word, to try the instrument on which he intended to play. Suppose he has done this with a view to draw my attention on himself, in order to divert it from another object more important to his design. Lastly, suppose he wishes to have imputed to the juggler some indirect methods of information which himself has had occasion to practise."

"What do you mean?" "It is possible that he may have bribed some of my servants to give him secret intelligence, or perhaps some papers which may serve his purpose. One of my domestics has absconded. What reason have I to think that the Armenian is not concerned in his leaving me? Such a connection, however, if it exists, may be ac-

cidentally discovered ; a letter may be intercepted ; a servant who is in the secret may betray his trust. Now all the consequence of the Armenian is destroyed, if I detect the source of his omniscience ; he therefore introduces this juggler, who must be supposed to have the same or some other design upon me. He takes care to give me early notice of him and his intentions, so that whatever I may hereafter discover, my suspicions must necessarily rest upon the Sicilian. This is the puppet with which he amuses me, whilst he himself, unobserved and unsuspected, is entangling me in invisible snares." "We will allow this. But is it consistent with the Armenian's plan, that he himself should destroy the illusion which he has created, and disclose the mysteries of his science to the eyes of the profane ?"

"What mysteries does he disclose ? None, surely, which he intends to practise on me ; he therefore loses nothing by the discovery. But, on the other hand, what an advantage will he gain if this pretended victory over juggling and deception should render me secure and unsuspecting ; if he succeeds in diverting my attention from the right quarter (I mean himself), and in fixing my wavering suspicions on an object most remote from the real one. If at any time, either from my own doubts or at the suggestion of another, I should be tempted to seek in the occult sciences for a key to his mysterious wonders, how could he better provide against such an enquiry than by contrasting his prodigies with the tricks of the juggler ? By confining the latter within artificial limits, and by delivering, as it were, into my hands, a scale by which to appreciate them, he naturally exalts and perplexes my ideas of the former. How many suspicions does he preclude by this single contrivance ! How many methods of accounting for his miracles, which might afterwards have occurred to me, does he refute beforehand !" "But in exposing such a finished deception, he has very much counteracted his own interest, both by quickening the penetration of those whom he meant to impose upon, and by staggering their belief of miracles in general. If he had had such a plan, your Highness's self is the best proof of its insufficiency."

“ Perhaps he has been mistaken in respect to myself, but his conclusions have nevertheless been well founded. Could he foresee that I should exactly notice the very circumstance which exposed the whole artifice? Was it in his plan, that the creature he employed should be so communicative? Are we certain that the Sicilian has not far exceeded his commission? He has undoubtedly done so with respect to the ring, and yet it is chiefly this single circumstance which determined my distrust in him. A plan whose contexture is so artful and refined, is easily spoiled in the execution by an awkward instrument. It certainly was not the Armenian’s intention that the juggler should speak to us in the style of a mountebank, that he should endeavour to impose upon us such fables as are too gross to bear the least reflection. For instance, with what countenance could this impostor affirm, that the miraculous being he spoke of, renounces all commerce with mankind at twelve in the night? Did not we see him among us at that very hour?” “ That is true. He must have forgotten it.” “ People of this description naturally overact their parts; and, by exceeding every limit of credibility, mar the effects which a well-managed deception is calculated to produce.” “ I cannot, however, yet prevail on myself to look upon the whole as a mere contrivance of art. What! the Sicilian’s terror, his convulsive fits, his sword, the deplorable situation in which we saw him, and which was even such as to move our pity; were all these nothing more than the mimicry of an actor? I allow that a skilful performer may carry imitation to a very high pitch, but he certainly has no power over the organs of life.” “ As for that, my friend, I have seen the celebrated Garrick in the character of Richard the Third. But were we at that moment sufficiently cool to be capable of observing dispassionately? Could we judge of the emotions of the Sicilian, when we were almost overcome by our own? Besides, the decisive crisis, even of a deception, is so momentous to the deceiver himself, that excessive anxiety may produce in him symptoms as violent as those which surprise excites in the deceived. Add to this, the unexpected entrance of the watch.” “ I am glad your Highness mentions that. Would the Armenian have ventured to

discover such an infamous scheme to the eye of justice, to expose the fidelity of his creature to such a dangerous test? And for what purpose?" "Leave that matter to him; he is no doubt acquainted with the people he employs. Do we know what secret crimes may have secured him the discretion of this man? You have been informed of the office he holds at Venice; what difficulty will he find in saving a man, of whom himself is the only accuser?"

This suggestion of the Prince was but too well justified by the event. For, some days after, on enquiring about the prisoner, we were told that he had escaped, and had not since been heard of. "You ask what could be his motives for delivering this man into the hands of justice?" continued the Prince. "By what other method, except this violent one, could he have wrested from the Sicilian such an infamous and improbable confession, which, however, was material to the success of his plan? Who but a man whose case is desperate, and who has nothing to lose, would consent to give so humiliating an account of himself? Under what other circumstances than such as these could we have believed such a confession." "I grant your Highness all this. The two apparitions were mere contrivances of art: the Sicilian has imposed upon us a tale which the Armenian his master had previously taught him: the efforts of both have been directed to the same end; and by this mutual intelligence all the wonderful incidents that have astonished us in this adventure may be easily explained. But the prophecy of the square of St. Mark, that first miracle, which as it were opened the door to all the rest, remains still unexplained; and of what use is the key to all his other wonders, if we must despair of resolving this single one?"

"Rather invert the proposition, my dear Count, and say, what do all these wonders prove, if I can demonstrate that a single one among them is a manifest deception? The prediction, I allow, is above my conception. If it had stopped there, if the Armenian had closed the scene with it, I confess, I do not know how far I might have been carried. But in the base alloy with which it is mixed,

it is certainly suspicious." "Gracious Sir, I grant it; but it still remains incomprehensible, and I defy all our philosophy to explain it." "But," continued the Prince, "can it be really so inexplicable?" After a few moments' reflection—"I am far from pretending to the title of a philosopher, and yet I am almost tempted to account for this miracle in a natural way, or at least to deprive it entirely of any extraordinary appearance." "If your Highness can do that," replied I, with a very unbelieving smile, "you will be the only wonder in which I have any faith." "As a proof," continued he, "how little we are justified in flying to supernatural powers for an explanation, I will point out to you two different ways by which we may perhaps account for this event, without doing any violence to nature." "Two ways at once! You do indeed raise my expectations."

"You have read, as well as I, the last accounts of my late cousin's illness. He died of an apoplexy. It was an attack during a fit of the ague. The extraordinariness of his death, I confess it, induced me to ask the opinions of some physicians upon the subject, and the knowledge which I acquired from that circumstance gives me a clue to this enchantment. The disorder of my deceased relative, which was one of a most uncommon and alarming nature, had this peculiar symptom, that during the fit of the ague it threw the patient into a deep and irrecoverable sleep, which naturally put an end to his existence on the return of the apoplectic paroxysm. As these paroxysms return in the most regular order, and at an appointed hour, the physician is enabled, from the very moment in which he forms his opinion on the nature of the disorder, to predict the hour of the patient's decease. The third paroxysm of a tertian ague will fall to a certainty on the fifth day after the appearance of the illness. Let us suppose then that our Armenian possesses a vigilant correspondent among the attendants of the deceased; that he was very much interested to gain information from thence; that he had views upon my person, to the prosecution of which my belief in the wonderful and the appearance of supernatural

powers would greatly conduce—thus you have a natural clue to this prediction, which is so inconceivable to you. This is sufficient, for you may hence see the possibility of a third person's informing another of a death which happened at the moment when he announced it, in a place at forty miles' distance."

"In truth your Highness in this instance combines things together, which, taken singly, appear very natural, but which could only be brought together by something that is not much better than enchantment." "What! Do you then fear a wonder less than an uncommon plan? As soon as we allow that the Armenian is engaged in a plan of consequence, of which my destruction is either the end, or at least conducive to it, (and may we not form that opinion of him with which his appearance first inspired us?) nothing will seem unnatural or forced, which could bring his scheme to a conclusion in the most expeditious manner. But what way could he devise more expeditious, than the securing his object by putting on the appearance of a miracle-worker? Who can resist a man to whom the spirits are obedient? However, I grant you that my conjectures are not perfectly natural; I confess that I am not even myself satisfied with them. I do not insist upon it, because I do not think it worth my while to call in to my assistance a well-formed and deliberate design, when it may at last turn out to be a mere accident." "What!" replied I; "may it be a mere accident?" "Certainly, nothing more!" continued the Prince. "The Armenian was aware of the danger of my cousin. He met us in the place of St. Mark. The opportunity invited him to hazard a prophecy, which, if it failed, would be nothing more than a loose word—but if it succeeded, might be of the greatest consequence. The event was favourable to this attempt—and he might still design to make use of the gift of prophecy for the connection of his plan—time will disclose this secret, or bury it in oblivion. But believe me, friend," (and he laid his hand upon mine, with a very earnest countenance,) "a man, to whose word the higher powers are obedient, will either not want the assistance of deception, or at least will despise it."

Thus ended a conversation which I have faithfully related, because it shows the difficulties which were to be overcome before the Prince could be effectually imposed upon. I hope it may free his memory from the imputation of having blindly and inconsiderately thrown himself into a snare which was spread for his destruction by the most unexampled and diabolical iniquity. Many, at the moment I am writing this, are, perhaps, smiling contemptuously at the Prince's credulity; but not all those who, in the fancied superiority of their own understanding, think themselves entitled to condemn him—not all those, I apprehend, would have resisted this first attempt with so much firmness. If afterwards, notwithstanding this happy prepossession, we witness his downfall; if we see that the black design against which, at its very opening, he was thus providentially warned, is finally successful, we shall not be so much inclined to ridicule his weakness, as to be astonished at the infamous ingenuity of a plot which could seduce an understanding so admirably prepared. Considerations of interest have no influence in my testimony. He, who alone would be thankful for it, is now no more. His dreadful destiny is accomplished. His soul has long since been purified before the throne of truth, where mine must likewise shortly appear. Pardon the involuntary tears which now flow at the remembrance of my deceased friend. But for the sake of justice I write this history. He was a great character, and would have adorned a throne which, seduced by the most atrocious artifice, he attempted to ascend by the commission of a murder.

Not long after these events, I began to observe an extraordinary alteration in the disposition of the Prince, which was partly the immediate consequence of the last event, and partly produced by the concurrence of many adventitious circumstances; for hitherto the Prince had avoided every severe trial of his faith, and contented himself with purifying the rude and unabstracted notions of religion in which he had been educated, by those more rational ideas upon the subject which obtruded themselves upon him, and by comparing the discordant opinions with each other, rather than by enquiring into the foundations of his faith. The

mystery of religion, he has many times confessed to me, always appeared to him like an enchanted castle, into which one does not set one's foot without horror; and that we act a much wiser part if for that reason we pass it with a willing resignation, without exposing ourselves to the danger of being bewildered in its labyrinths. Nevertheless, a contrary propensity irresistibly impelled him to those researches which were connected with it. A servile and bigoted education was the cause of this bias: this had impressed frightful images upon his tender brain, which he was never able perfectly to obliterate during his whole life. Religious melancholy was an hereditary disorder in his family. The education which he and his brothers received was actuated by this principle; the men to whose care they were entrusted, selected with this view, were also either enthusiasts or hypocrites, whose only method of securing to themselves the approbation of his noble parents, was by stifling all the sprightliness of the boy by a gloomy restraint of his mental faculties.

Such was the dark and gloomy aspect which the whole of our Prince's childhood wore. Mirth was banished even from his amusements. All his ideas of religion were accompanied by some frightful image, and the representations of terror and severity were those which first possessed themselves of his lively imagination, and which also the longest retained their empire over it. His God was an object of terror, a being whose sole occupation is the chastisement of his creatures; the adoration which he paid to him a blind submission, stifling all his courage and vigour. In all his infantine or youthful propensities, which a stout body and blooming constitution naturally excited to break out with greater violence, Religion stood in his way; she opposed every thing upon which his youthful heart was bent: he learned to consider her not as a friend, but as the scourge of his passions; so that a silent indignation was continually kindled against her in his heart, which, together with a revering faith and a blind dread, made both in his heart and head the strangest mixture — an abhorrence of the Lord before whom he trembled. It is no wonder, therefore, that he took the first opportunity of escaping from so galling a

yoke — but he fled from it as a bond-slave from his rigorous master, who even in the midst of freedom drags along with him a sense of his servitude ; for, as he did not renounce the faith of his earlier years from a deliberate conviction — as he did not wait till the maturity and improvement of his reason had weaned him from it — as he had escaped from it like a fugitive, upon whose person the rights of his master are still in force, so was he obliged, even after his widest separation, to return to it at last. He had escaped with his chain ; and must necessarily become the prey of any one who should discover it, and know how to make use of the discovery. That he considered himself in such a light, though the reader may not yet have supposed so, the sequel of this history will prove.

The confessions of the Sicilian left impressed upon his mind more important conclusions than the whole of the circumstance deserved ; and the small victory which his reason had thence gained over this weak imposture, remarkably increased his reliance upon it. The facility with which he had been able to unravel this deception, appeared to have perfectly overwhelmed him. Truth and error were not yet so accurately distinguished from each other in his mind, but that he often happened to mistake the arguments which were in favour of the one for those which were in favour of the other. Thence it arose, that the same blow which urged his faith to credulity, made the whole edifice of it totter. In this instance he fell into the same error as an unexperienced man who has been deceived in love or friendship because he made a bad choice, and who drops all credit in these sensations, because he takes mere incidental circumstances for their actual distinguishing features. The unmasking of a deception made even truth suspicious to him, because he had unfortunately discovered the truth on very weak grounds. This imaginary triumph pleased him in proportion to the magnitude of the oppression from which it seemed to have delivered him. From this instant there arose in his mind a scepticism which did not spare even the most venerable objects. Many circumstances concurred to encourage him in this turn of mind, and still more to confirm him in it.

He now quitted the retirement in which he had hitherto lived, and was obliged to give way to a more dissipated mode of life. His rank was discovered. Attentions which he was obliged to return, etiquettes for which he was indebted to his rank, drew him imperceptibly within the vortex of the great world. His rank, as well as his personal attractions, opened to him the circles of all the *beaux esprits* in Venice, and he soon found himself on terms of intimacy with the most enlightened persons in the republic, the men of learning as well as politicians. This obliged him to enlarge the uniform and narrow circle to which his understanding had hitherto been confined. He began to perceive the poverty and debility of his ideas, and to feel the want of more elevated impressions. The old-fashioned dress of his understanding, spite of the many advantages with which it was accompanied, formed an unpleasing contrast with the current ideas of society ; his ignorance of the commonest things frequently exposed him to ridicule, and nothing did he dread so much as that. The veneration for high birth entertained in his native country, appeared to him a challenge to overcome it in his own person. Thence arose a peculiarity in his character ; he was offended with every attention that he thought he owed to his rank, and not to his natural good qualities. He felt this humiliation principally in the company of persons who shone by their abilities, and triumphed, as it were, over their birth by their merit. To perceive himself distinguished as a prince in such a society, was always a base humiliation to him, because he unfortunately conceived that by that title he was totally excluded from all competition. All these circumstances together convinced him of the necessity for the formation of his mind, which he had hitherto neglected, in order to raise it to a level with the thinking part of the world, from which he had remained so far remote ; and for that purpose he chose the most fashionable books, to which he now applied himself with all the ardour with which he was accustomed to pursue every object he pitched upon. But the unskilful hand that directed his choice always prompted him to select such as were little calculated for the improvement either of his heart or his reason. And even,

in this instance, he was influenced by that propensity which rendered the charms of every thing incomprehensible and irresistible. He had neither attention nor memory for any thing that was not connected with this : his reason and his heart remained empty, while he was filling the vacuities in his brain with confused ideas. The dazzling style of the one captivated his imagination, while the subtlety of the other ensnared his reason. They were both able easily to possess themselves of a mind which became the prey of any one who obtruded himself upon it with a good assurance. A course of reading, which had been continued with ardour for more than a year, had scarcely enriched him with one benevolent idea ; but filled his head with doubts, which, as a natural consequence with such a character, had almost found an unfortunate road to his heart. In a word, he had entered this labyrinth as a credulous enthusiast, had left it as a sceptic, and was at length become a perfect free-thinker.

Among the many circles into which they had introduced him, there was a private society called the Bucentauro, which, under the external show of a noble and rational liberality of sentiment, encouraged the most unbridled licentiousness of manners and opinions. As they enumerated many of the clergy among their members, and could even boast of some cardinals at their head, the Prince was the more easily induced to be admitted into it. He thought that certain dangerous truths, which reason discovers, could be no where better preserved than in the hands of such persons, whose rank confined them to moderation, and who had had the advantage of hearing and examining the other side of the question ; but the Prince did not recollect that licentiousness of sentiment and manners takes so much the stronger hold among persons of this rank, inasmuch as they for that reason feel one curb less. This was the case with the Bucentauro ; most of whose members, through an execrable philosophy, and manners worthy of such a guide, were not only a disgrace to their own rank, but even to human nature itself. The society had its secret degrees ; and I will believe, for the credit of the Prince, that they never thought him worthy of admission into the inmost

sanctuary. Every one who entered this society was obliged, at least so long as he continued to be a member of it, to lay aside all distinctions arising from rank, nation, or religion; in short, every general mark or distinction whatever, and to submit himself to the condition of universal equality. To be elected a member was, indeed, a difficult matter, as superiority of understanding alone paved the way to it. The society boasted of the highest *ton* and the most cultivated taste, and such indeed was its fame throughout all Venice. This, as well as the appearance of equality which predominated in it, attracted the Prince irresistibly. Sensible conversations, set off by the most admirable humour, instructive amusements, and the flower of the learned and political world, which were all attracted to this point as to their common centre, concealed from him for a long time the danger of this connection. Though he had by degrees discovered, through its mask, the spirit of the institution, as they were tired of being any longer on their guard before him, to recede was dangerous, and false shame and anxiety for his safety obliged him to conceal the displeasure which he felt. But he already began, merely from familiarity with men of this class and their sentiments, though they did not excite him to imitation, to lose the pure and charming simplicity of his character, and the delicacy of his moral feelings. His understanding, so little supported by any real knowledge, could not, without foreign assistance, solve the fallacious sophisms with which he had been here ensnared; and this fatal corroder had consumed all, or nearly all, on which his morality rested. He gave away the natural and necessary supports of his happiness for sophisms which deserted him at a critical moment, and consequently obliged him to abide by the best decision which should first offer itself.

Perhaps it was yet left to the hand of a friend to extricate him at a proper opportunity from this abyss; but, besides that I did not become acquainted with the interior of the Bucentauro till long after the evil had taken place, an urgent circumstance called me away from Venice just at the beginning of this period. Moreover, Lord Seymour, a valuable acquaintance of the Prince's, whose under-

standing was proof against every species of deception, and who would infallibly have been a secure support to him, left us at this time in order to return to his native country. Those in whose hands I left the Prince were very worthy men, but inexperienced, excessively narrow in their religious opinions, and as much deficient in insight into the evil as in credit with the Prince. They had nothing to oppose to his captious sophisms, except the maxims of a blind and unenquiring faith, which either irritated him or excited his ridicule. He saw through them too easily, and his superior reason soon silenced those weak defenders of the good cause, which will be clearly evinced from an instance that I shall introduce in the sequel. The others, who, subsequent to this, possessed themselves of his confidence, were much more occupied in plunging him deeper into it. When I returned to Venice in the following year, a change had taken place in every thing.

The influence of this new philosophy soon showed itself in the Prince's conduct. The more he openly pursued pleasure, and formed new friendships, the more did he desert his old ones. He pleased me less and less every day ; we saw each other seldom, and indeed he was seldom to be found. He had launched out into the torrent of the great world. His threshold was never clear when he was at home. One amusement introduced another — one banquet another — and one pleasure was succeeded by a second. He was the beauty whom every one adored — the king and idol of every circle. As often as he reflected on the former quietness of his retired life, amidst the bustle of the world, so often did he find more reason for astonishment. Every thing met his wishes ; — whatever he uttered was admirable, and when he remained silent, it was committing a robbery upon the company. They understood the art of almost banishing reflection from his soul by an agreeable thoughtlessness, and through a delicate assistance to overwhelm him with it. This happiness, which accompanied him every where, and this universal success, raised him indeed too much in his own ideas, because it gave him reliance upon and confidence in himself.

The high opinion which he thence acquired of his own

worth, made him credit the excessive and almost idolatrous adoration that was paid to his understanding ; which, without this augmented and somewhat just self-complacency, must have necessarily recalled him to his senses. For the present, however, this universal voice was only the confirmation of that which his complacent vanity whispered to him in private — a tribute which he was entitled to by right. He would have infallibly disengaged himself from this snare, had they allowed him to take breath — had they granted him a moment of uninterrupted leisure for comparing his real merit with the picture that was exhibited to him in this seducing mirror ; but his existence was a continued state of intoxication, of a staggering dizziness. The higher he had been elevated, the more difficulty had he to support himself in his elevation. This incessant exertion slowly undermined him, — rest had forsaken even his slumbers. They had discovered his weakness, and turned to good account the passion which they had kindled in his breast.

His worthy attendants soon suffered for the *spirit* of their lord. That anxious sensibility, those glorious truths which his heart once embraced with the greatest enthusiasm, now began to be the objects of his ridicule. He revenged himself on the great truths of religion for the oppression which he had so long suffered from misconception. But, since from too true a voice his heart combated the intoxication of his head, there was more of acrimony than of humour in his jokes. His disposition began to alter, and caprice to make its appearance. The most beautiful ornament of his character, his moderation, vanished, — parasites had poisoned his excellent heart. That tender delicacy of address which frequently made his attendants forget that he was their lord, was now obliged not seldom to give place to a decisive and despotic tone, that made the more sensible impression because it was not founded upon the external distinction of birth, for the want of which they could have more easily consoled themselves, and which he himself esteemed less ; but upon an injurious estimation of his own individual merit : since, when at home, he was attacked by reflections that seldom

made their appearance in the bustle of company ; his own people seldom beheld him otherwise than gloomy, peevish, and unhappy, whilst a forced vivacity made him the soul of every circle. With the sincerest sorrow did we behold him treading this dangerous path. In the tumult in which he was involved, the feeble voice of friendship was no longer heard, and he was yet too much intoxicated to understand it.

Just at the beginning of this epoch an affair of the greatest consequence required my presence in the court of my sovereign, and which I dared not postpone even for the dearest interests of friendship. An invisible hand, which I did not discover till long after that period, had contrived to derange my affairs there, and to spread reports which I was obliged to hasten to contradict by my presence. My absence from the Prince was as painful to me as it was pleasing to him. The ties which united us had now been severed for some time ; but his fate had awakened all my anxiety : I on that account made the Baron de F—— promise to inform me in his letters of every event, which he has done in the most conscientious manner. As I was now for a considerable time no longer an eye-witness of these events, it will be allowable for me to introduce the Baron de F—— in my stead, and to fill up the gap in my narrative by the contents of his letters, though the representation of my friend F—— is not always that which I should have given. I would not, however, alter any of his expressions, by which the reader will be enabled to discover the truth with very little trouble.

Baron F—— to the Count O——.

I thank you, my beloved friend, that you have given me permission to continue with you, even in your absence, the conversation of friendship, which, during your stay here, was my greatest pleasure. There is not any person here with whom I could venture to converse, as you are well aware, on account of private transactions ; and, independent of that, I despise the character of the people. Since the Prince became a member of their society, and from the

moment that you were torn from us, I have been friendless in the midst of this populous city.

Z—— takes it in an easier manner ; for, encircled by the fair ones at Venice, he learns to forget the sorrows which he is obliged to share with me when at home. And why should he perplex himself ? He desires nothing from the Prince but that which a master would bestow ; but I, you know, place him nearer to my heart, and think I can never be too solicitous about his welfare and happiness ; and, indeed, I have reason for it. I have now lived with him sixteen years, and exist only for him. At the age of nine years I entered into his service, and since that time I have never been separated from him. I have grown up under his patronage, shared with him his pleasures and misfortunes, and time has converted respect into a sincere attachment. Until now I looked upon him as my friend and brother ; we basked in the sunbeam of happiness, uninterrupted by the clouds of misery.

Since you have left us, considerable alterations have taken place. The Prince —— de —— arrived here last week with a great retinue, and has corrupted our circle of acquaintance with ideas of a tumultuous life. As he and our Prince are so nearly related, and live at present upon good terms, I suspect they will not separate from one another during his stay here, which will last, as I have heard, till the Ascension. His *début* has already attracted notice ; and for ten days the Prince has been in the midst of gaiety. The style in which the Prince —— de —— has begun his career may be justified upon the ground that his stay here will not be long ; but the first part of the business is, that he has induced our Prince to partake of those insidious pleasures, knowing that he could not easily deny him his request, on account of the peculiar connection which exists between their houses ; added to this, in a few weeks we must depart from Venice, when he will be obliged to abandon this extraordinary and insufferable mockery of happiness, and which, perhaps, may make a serious impression on his mind.

The Prince —— de ——, it is reported, is here on the business of the order of ——. That he has taken advan-

tage of all the acquaintances of our Prince you may easily imagine. He was received into the Bucentauro with great splendour, and pleased himself with the idea that he was characterised as a wit, and one of great spirit ; and he has called himself in his correspondence (which he maintains in all parts of the world) the *philosophical Prince*. I know not whether you have ever had the fortune to see him personally. He displays a promising exterior, piercing eyes, and a countenance full of expression. Polite, and unaffected, he entertains (pardon me this expression) a princely respect for the feelings of his inferiors, but at the same time puts great confidence in himself. Who could refuse to pay adoration to so princely a character ? and how such a solitary Prince as ours will appear in opposition to such dazzling accomplishments, time itself must discover. In the arrangement of our affairs, many and great changes have taken place. We possess a new and magnificent house opposite the new Procuracy, because the lodgings at the Moor Hotel were too small for the Prince. Our household has been augmented by twelve persons. Pages, moors, body-guards, &c. grace our retinue. You complained during your stay here of extravagance ; you should be here now to witness the present system. Our internal arrangements are still the same ; only that the Prince, who no longer respects the advice of those he once loved, is become more reserved and cold towards us, and that we very seldom see him or are in his company, except in the hours employed in dressing and undressing him. Under the pretext that we speak the French language very badly, and the Italian not at all, he excludes us from his presence, which would not affect me in any great degree, but that I believe, to speak the truth, he is ashamed of us ; and that circumstance displeases me, because I am confident we have not deserved such treatment.

Of all our people (as you wish to know the minutiae) he seems most attached to Biondello, whom he took into his service, as you must remember, when he could not discover the retreat of his former servant from Bremen, and who has become, by this new manner of life, quite a necessary being. This man knows how every thing is going on at Venice, and he employs his time to some pur-

pose. He is as if he had a thousand eyes and a thousand hands to set in motion at once. He contrives all plans, and gains the greater part of his knowledge, as he says, by the help of the gondoliers ; for that reason, he has become a great acquisition to the Prince. He makes him acquainted with every new face whom the Prince has met in his societies ; and the secret information which he gives his Highness has always been found correct. Beside this, he reads and writes the Italian and French in an excellent style, by which means he has already become the Prince's secretary. I must relate to you a trait of fidelity in him, which is indeed very rare to be found in men of his station. Not long ago a merchant of great consequence from Rimini begged to be admitted to the Prince. The matter concerned a particular complaint against Biondello. The Procurator, his former master, who must have been an odd fellow, had for some time lived upon bad terms with his relations. Biondello possessed his confidence, and to him he intrusted all his secrets. As he was upon his death-bed, he made him swear never to disclose them to any one, that his relations might not be benefited by them, and gave him, as a reward, a great legacy.

When the will was opened, and his papers inspected, there were found considerable numbers of blanks, to which Biondello alone could furnish the key. He denied that he knew any thing of the matter, gave up to the relations his legacy, and persevered in his fidelity to the injunctions of his deceased master. Great offers were made to him by the relations, but all to no purpose ; at last he eluded their threats of forcing him to confession, by entering into the service of the Prince. This merchant, who was the heir at law, addressed himself to the Prince, and made still greater offers to Biondello if he would discover the secret—but it was all in vain. The Prince interfered, but he remained firm. He confessed, however, to his Highness, that secrets of great importance were confided to him, and he did not deny that the deceased might have acted with too much severity towards his relations ; but he added, “ he was my good master and benefactor, and with the firmest confidence in my sincerity he died. I was the only friend he left in the world—as such I will never betray

my trust, nor act in contradiction to his dying request." In the mean time he gave a hint, that a discovery would not add to the honour of his deceased master. Was not such conduct worthy to be imitated? You may easily imagine that the Prince did not insist upon his violating his vow of fidelity. This extraordinary attachment which he showed for the deceased gained him the most unlimited confidence of his royal master.

Happiness attend you, my dear friend. I look back upon our former manner of life with secret pleasure, to which you have contributed in a high degree. I fear we shall never more enjoy those tranquil hours at Venice which we were wont formerly to do, and am much mistaken if the Prince is not of the same way of thinking. The element in which he lives at present is not that in which he can be happy in future, or an experience of sixteen years deceives me. Farewell!

The same to the same.

May 18.

I had no idea that our stay at Venice would prove so satisfactory as it has done. He has saved the life of a man — I am reconciled to him. The Prince not long ago suffered himself to be carried home in a chair from the Bicentauro; and two footmen, with Biondello, conducted him. I know not how it happened, but the chair, which had been hired in haste, broke, and the Prince was obliged to walk on foot the remainder of the way. Biondello went before. The way lay through several dark streets; and as it was not far from day-break, some of the lamps burnt but faintly, while the others were totally extinguished. They had been walking a quarter of an hour, when Biondello discovered that he had taken the wrong road. The similarity of the bridges had deceived him, and instead of crossing that of St. Mark, they found themselves in *Sestiere di Castello*. It was in one of the by streets, and not a soul stirring near the spot. They were obliged to turn back to gain, as the best way, one of the principal streets. They had walked but a few steps, when in an adjoining street they distinctly heard the cry of "Murder!" The Prince, unarmed as he was, snatched from one of the ser-

vants a stick ; and with his usual courage, which you have often witnessed, ran towards the place whence the voice issued. Three ruffianlike fellows were just on the point of vanquishing a person, who, with his servant, was defending himself, apparently overcome by fatigue, when the Prince appeared, and prevented the villains from murdering him. His voice, and those of his servants, startled the murderers, who did not expect in such a dismal place to meet with any interruption.

They immediately left their man, after several slight stabs with their daggers, and took flight. Fainting with loss of blood, the wounded man sunk into the arms of the Prince : his conductors then told him, that he had saved the life of the Marquis of Civitella, the nephew of the Cardinal A——i. As the Marquis's wounds bled very much, Biondello performed as well as he was able the office of surgeon, and the Prince immediately saw him taken to the palace of his uncle, which was not far distant from the spot. This done, he left the house, without discovering his rank. But through the means of a footman, who was acquainted with Biondello, he was betrayed. The following morning the Cardinal appeared, an old acquaintance from the Bucentauro. The visit lasted an hour ; the Cardinal was in great emotion, and when they separated tears stood in his eyes ; the Prince also appeared extremely concerned. The same evening his Highness paid a visit to the wounded man, whom the surgeon affirmed would soon recover. The cloak in which he was wrapped up had in some measure shielded him from the force with which the stabs were given. Since that accident, not a day has passed over without the Prince paying a visit to the Cardinal, or receiving one from him ; and a great friendship begins to exist between him and that family.

The Cardinal is a venerable man of sixty, with a majestic appearance, but full of gaiety and good health. They think him one of the richest prelates in the whole republic. Of his enormous fortune he himself is the treasurer ; and, although a prudent economist, he does not despise the pleasures of the world. This nephew, who is his only heir, does not always possess the good opinion of his uncle. Although the old

man is not an enemy to youthful pleasures, the conduct of the nephew appears to exhaust every principle of tolerance in his relation. His dissipated principles, and his licentious manner of living, supported by every vice that is countenanced by the grossest sensuality, make him the terror of all fathers, and the curse of domestic happiness. This last attack, it is said, was owing to an intrigue which he had concerted with the wife of the —— ambassador: not to mention other troubles, from which only the power and money of the Cardinal could extricate him. But for this the Cardinal might be the most enviable man in all Italy, because he possesses every thing that can make life worth preserving. But his nephew's enormities render the gifts of fortune superfluous; and the continual fear of not being able to find an heir worthy of his property, diminishes the comfort that his Eminence would otherwise enjoy in such a state of affluence.

I have this information from Biondello. In this man the Prince has acquired a treasure. Every day he makes himself more worthy of estimation, and we almost hourly discover in him some new talent. Not long ago the Prince, being over-fatigued, could not sleep. The night-lamp was extinguished, and no bell could waken the valet de chambre, who it was soon found had gone out of the house to visit an opera girl. The Prince had the resolution to get up himself, to call one of his people. He had not gone far, when he heard at a little distance from him enchanting music. He followed the sound, and found Biondello playing upon the flute in his room, with his fellow-servants round him. He commanded him to proceed. With admirable skill Biondello repeated the same air, with the most delightful variations and niceties of a virtuoso. The Prince, who is a connoisseur in music, declared, that he might play with great confidence in the best concert.

"I must dismiss this man," said he to me the following morning; "I am unable to recompense him according to his merits." Biondello, who heard these words, came towards him. "Gracious sir, if you do that, you deprive me of my best reward." "You are worthy of something better than being a servant," said my master. "I will not

any longer be a bar to the improvement of your fortune." "Do not press upon me any other fortune, gracious sir, than that which I have chosen myself." "And to neglect such a talent—No! I must not consent." "Then permit me, your Highness, to exercise it every now and then in your presence."

To this proposition the Prince immediately consented, and Biondello obtained an apartment adjoining the sleeping-room of his master, where he lulled him to repose by soft and delicate airs, and awoke him in the morning with the same melody. The Prince insisted upon increasing his salary, which he did not accept without requesting his Highness to permit him to let it lie in his hands, as a capital which perhaps at some future period might be of service to him. The Prince expected that he would soon apply for his money, or some other favour; and whatever it might have been the Prince would not have denied it. Farewell, my best of friends. I expect with impatience news from R——n.

The same to the same.

June 4.

The Marquis Civitella, who is now entirely recovered from his wounds, was introduced last week by the Cardinal his uncle to the Prince, and since that day he has followed him like his shadow. Biondello, I suspect, has not told me the truth concerning the character of the Marquis, at least he has gone too far in his description. He is to all appearance a most amiable man, and irresistible in company. It is not possible to be angry with him; the first sight of him has conquered all my prejudices. Figure to your mind a man of the most enchanting person, a face full of uncommon expression, an insinuating tone of voice, possessed of the most fluent eloquence, united with all the advantages of the best education. He has none of that low despicable pride which in general so much disgraces the nobility here. Every action teems with the energy of youth, benevolence, and warm sensibility. They must, in relating his extravagances, have gone far beyond the truth; I never saw a more perfect contrast than his conduct is to

that which is represented of him. If he be really so licentious as Biondello asserted, then he is a siren, whom no creature is able to resist.

Towards me he acted with unreserved confidence. He confessed to me with the most agreeable frankness, that he did not stand in high favour with his uncle the Cardinal, and perhaps he might have deserved his censure. But he was seriously resolved to amend his life ; and he declared that the merit of his reformation would entirely fall to the Prince : in the mean time he hoped, through his interference, to be entirely reconciled with his uncle, because he had the highest confidence in the Prince's character. He had wanted till now a friend and instructor, and he hoped to acquire both in the person of the Prince, who, indeed, exercises all the authority of a tutor over him, and guides him with the paternal watchfulness and solicitude of a Mentor. This confidence also gives him certain advantages, and he knows perfectly well how to make them valuable. He seldom quits the presence of the Prince ; he partakes of all his pleasures, and has lately become one of the Bucen-tauro ; and that is lucky for him, — he was before too young. Wherever he goes with the Prince, he charms the society by his accomplishments, which he is well skilled in turning to the greatest advantage. Nobody, they say, ever could succeed in reclaiming him ; and should the Prince accomplish this Herculean labour, he will deserve the highest encomiums for his conduct. But I fear very much the tide will turn, and Mentor become the pupil of his scholar ; to this end all the present circumstances seem to lead.

The Prince — d — has departed, to the greatest satisfaction of all here, my master not excepted. What I thought, dear O —, is thus happily accomplished. Two such opposite characters could not long, I was confident, maintain a good understanding with each other. The Prince — d — was not long at Venice before I observed a schism in their friendship ; from which circumstance the Prince was in danger of losing all his former admirers. Wherever he went, he found this rival in his way, who possessed the artful quality of turning every advantage in which our Prince was deficient to good account. He had a variety of

little manœuvres at his command, which our master, from a noble sensibility, disdained. From such circumstances, in a short time, he procured a number of friends of his own description to follow his advice and participate in his schemes.* It would have been better for the Prince if he had not considered him as an enemy ; but had looked forward to the time when this would have been the case. But now he has advanced too far into the stream, to reach the shore without difficulty. Although these trifles, by habit, have acquired an ascendancy over him, and probably he may despise them in his heart, yet his pride will not permit him to renounce them, naturally supposing that his submission will appear like conviction, rather than a free disposition to confess his abhorrence of them. The satirical manner in which they always conversed, and the spirit of rivalry that influenced his opponent, have also seized upon him. To preserve his conquests, and to maintain himself upon the dangerous principles to which the opinion of the world had rivetted him, he is resolved to augment the allurements of fashion and gaiety, and this cannot be acquired but by splendour equal to his rank ; on that account he has been involved in perpetual banquets, concerts, and gaming. A long chain of poverty is the unavoidable consequence of this unhappy connection.

We have got rid at last of the rival ; but what he has subverted cannot so easily be restored. The treasure of the Prince is exhausted ; all that he had saved by a strict economy is gone ; we must hasten from Venice, or else be involved in debt, which, till now, he has carefully avoided. Our departure is certainly to take place as soon as fresh remittances arrive. The many unnecessary expenses he has incurred would be of little consequence if his happiness increased in proportion ; but he was never less happy than at present ! He feels that he is not now what he formerly was — he is dissatisfied with himself, and rushes into new dissipation, to avoid the piercing consequences of reflec-

* In the unfavourable opinion which the Baron F—— forms of our Prince, in several parts of the first letter, every one who has the happiness to know him intimately, will think with me, that he went beyond the limits of his judgment, and will ascribe it to the prejudice of this young observer.

tion. One new acquaintance follows another, which is fatal to his reformation. I know not what may happen ; we must depart, — we have no other safety. — But, dear friend, as yet I have not received a single line from you ; how must I interpret this long silence ?

The same to the same.

June 12th.

Receive my thanks, dear friend, for that token of your remembrance which young B——hl brought over to me. But what do you say about letters which I was to have received ? I have not received any letters from you till now, — not even a line. What a circuit must those which I now receive have taken ! For the future, dear O——, when you honour me with your letters, send them by Trent, and under cover to my master.

We have at length been obliged, my dear friend, to take that step which we had hitherto so fortunately avoided. The remittances were kept back, even at this pressing emergency — for the first time were they kept back ; we were absolutely compelled to have recourse to a usurer, and the Prince willingly pays something more for the sake of secrecy. The worst of these unpleasant circumstances is, that it delays our departure. Such was the state of our affairs when the Prince and I came to an explanation. The whole of the business had passed through Biondello's hands, and the Jew was present before I had the least suspicion of it. I was grieved to the heart to see the Prince reduced to such an extremity, and it revived in me all the recollection of the past, and all my fears for the future ; so that I certainly might have looked a little melancholy and gloomy when the usurer left the room. The Prince, to whom the preceding scene had doubtless been by no means pleasing, walked backwards and forwards with uneasiness. The rouleaus of gold were yet lying on the table — I was standing at the window, and employing myself in counting the windows in the *Procuratié* — there was a long silence. At length he addressed himself to me —

“ F——,” he began, “ I cannot bear any dismal faces about me.” I was silent. “ Why do you not answer

me? Do I not see that it will break your heart not to pour forth your vexation? I command you to speak. You may, perhaps, wonder what extraordinary affairs I am concealing from you." "If I am gloomy, gracious Sir," replied I, "it is only because I do not see you in better spirits." "I know," continued he, "that you think I have acted wrongly for some time past — that every step which I have taken has displeased you — that — What does the Count d'O — say in his letters?" "The Count d'O — has not written to me." "Not written! Why will you not confess the truth? You lay open your hearts to each other — you and the Count. I know it very well: however, you need not conceal it from me. I shall not introduce myself into your secrets." "The Count d'O —," replied I, "has only answered the first of three letters which I wrote to him." "I was wrong," continued he; "is it not so?" (taking up one of the rouleaus) "I should not have acted thus." "I see very plainly that the step was *necessary*." "I ought not to have involved myself in such a necessity."

I remained silent. "Indeed, I ought not to have ventured beyond that point in the completion of my wishes, so as to have become a grey-beard as soon as I became a man. Because I once step forth from the dreary uniformity of my former life, and look around me to see whether there will spring up no source of enjoyment for me in any other quarter; because I —" "If it were only a trial, gracious Sir, I have nothing more to say; for the experience which it has procured for you would not be purchased at too dear a rate, though it cost three times as much. It hurts me, I must confess, that the opinion of the world should have to decide upon the question, How you can be happy?" "Fortunate man, who can thus despise the opinion of the world! I am its creature, and must be its slave. What else are we governed by but opinion? Opinion is every thing with us princes. Opinion is our nurse and educatress in infancy, our legislatress and mistress in our manly years, and our crutch in old age. Take from us what we receive from opinion, and the meanest of the humblest class is better off than we are;

for his fate has taught him a philosophy which enables him to bear it. A prince who laughs at opinion, is his own destroyer, like the priest who denies the existence of a God."

"And yet, gracious Prince—" "I know what you are going to say. I can pass the boundary of the circle which my birth has drawn around me. But can I eradicate from my memory all the foolish ideas which education and early habit have planted in it, and which a hundred thousand of you fools have ever been impressing with more and more firmness? Every one wishes to be what he is to *perfection*, and our existence consists, in short, in *appearing happy*. If we cannot be so according to your mode, shall we not for that reason be so at all? If we can no longer taste of joy immediately from its uncorrupted source, shall we not deceive ourselves with an artificial enjoyment? shall we not snatch a small compensation even from the very hand which robs us?" "You once found these joys in your own heart." "But if I do not any longer find them there!—Oh, how came we to fall upon this subject? Why must you awake in me the recollection of that, even if I have had recourse to this tumult of voluptuousness, in order to stifle a voice which renders my life miserable—in order to lull to rest this inquisitive reason, which moves to and fro in my brain like a sharp sickle, and with every new stroke cuts off a new branch of my happiness?" "Best of princes!" He got up, and walked backwards and forwards in the room with unusual agitation, and soon after left it.

Pardon, dear O——, this tedious letter. You wish to know every trifle which concerns the Prince, and I may justly rank his moral philosophy among them. I know that the state of his mind is important to you, and his actions, I am aware, are on that account also important to you. I have for that reason faithfully transcribed all that I recollected of this conversation. I shall at a future period inform you of a new occurrence, which you could hardly have been led to expect from a dialogue like that of to-day. Farewell.

The same to the same.

July 1.

As the time for our departure from Venice approaches, we are determined to employ this week in an examination of all the remarkable pictures and buildings, which is generally delayed to the last moment. They praised highly the work* of Paul Veronese, which was to be seen in a Benedictine convent upon the island of St. George. You must not expect from me a minute description of this beautiful masterpiece, from the contemplation of which I derived the most satisfactory pleasure; but it was a sight worthy to be enjoyed longer. We should have had as many hours as minutes to study a painting of a hundred and twenty figures, which is thirty feet in breadth. It is impossible to observe the beauties which the artist has displayed in it, by just glancing at the whole. It is however a pity that so valuable a work, which ought to adorn a place of more utility, should be buried within the walls of a convent for a few monks to gaze at. The church of this convent deserves also the attention of the connoisseur: it is one of the handsomest in the city.

Towards evening we set off for the Giudecca, to spend a few hours in the charming gardens that surround it. The society, which was not numerous, separated very soon; and Civitella, who had been the whole day seeking for an opportunity to speak to me in private, thus addressed me—"You are the friend of the Prince, and possess his confidence, as I know from good authority. When I went to-day to his hotel, I met a man upon the stairs, and immediately guessed the business he had been upon. I found the Prince, as I entered his apartments, thoughtful and dejected." I was about to interrupt him. "You cannot deny it," he continued, "I know the man, for I took very particular notice of his person. Is it possible that the Prince, who has friends at Venice, to whom he is as dear as life, should in a case of necessity make use of such a wretch? Be sincere, baron!—Is the Prince embarrassed in his circumstances? You may endeavour

* The marriage at Cana.

to hide the truth, but it is in vain. What I cannot learn from you I will obtain from a man to whom every secret is a prize, and ready to be sold." "What, Marquis!" "Pardon me. I must endure the charge of being indiscreet, to avoid the imputation of ingratitude. The Prince saved my life, and, what goes far beyond that, he has instilled into my mind the principles of virtue. If I see the Prince act in a manner which must be expensive to him, and beneath his dignity; if it is in my power to assist him, I never can resist it." "The Prince is not now in any embarrassment. Several remittances, which we expected from Trent, are, indeed, unexpectedly detained; but accidentally perhaps, or from the idea that his departure is near at hand. This is now fixed upon; and till then—" He shook his head. "Do not deceive me," said he. "I mean not by doing this to diminish the obligation I owe the Prince. No, not all the riches of my uncle could repay him. I am anxious to free him from one unhappy moment. My uncle possesses a large fortune, which I can dispose of as if it were my own. I consider it a fortunate circumstance that the moment is arrived when I can be useful to the Prince. I know," he continued, "with what delicacy the Prince will treat my offer;—but, on the other hand, I hope he will lay aside his prejudices, and suffer me to enjoy the satisfaction of having in some measure returned the obligation I owe to him." He continued to urge his request till I had promised him that I would do all in my power to make the Prince accept his offer. But I knew his character, and for that reason I despaired of success. He appeared satisfied however with my promise, though he confessed that it would give him great uneasiness if the Prince considered him in the light of a stranger. Lost in conversation, we had wandered from the company, and were just about to return, when Z—— approached us. "I thought the Prince had been with you?" said he: "is he not here?"

We immediately returned with him, thinking to find the Prince with the other part of the company. "The society is together, but the Prince is not among them," said I: "I really do not know how it happened that we missed

him." Here Civitella suggested that he might possibly have visited the adjoining church, which he had a little time before remarked for its beauty. We immediately went to seek for him there. As we approached it we discovered Biondello waiting at the entrance. When we came nearer, we observed the Prince rush hastily out from a small door; the agitation of his mind was impressed upon his countenance. He called Biondello to him, and seemed to instruct him in the execution of some commission of consequence; his eyes were constantly directed to the gate, which remained open. Biondello hastened into the church. The Prince, without perceiving us, pushed through the crowd, and went back to the society.

It was resolved to sup in an open pavilion, and the Marquis, without our knowledge, had procured some musicians to entertain us with a concert. It was quite select; but there was among the performers a young lady who sung delightfully, and whose voice did not more enchant us than the beauty of her person. Nothing seemed to make an impression upon the Prince; he spoke little, and answered our questions confusedly; his eyes were constantly riveted upon the spot from whence Biondello was to come; and it was visible to all, that something of consequence affected his mind. Civitella asked him how he liked the church; he could not give any description of it. He spoke of several remarkable pictures, which were highly esteemed; but he had not observed them. We perceived that our questions were unpleasant to him, and therefore we discontinued our enquiries. One hour after another passed away, and Biondello did not arrive. The impatience of the Prince could no longer be concealed: he went from supper very early, and walked alone up and down the aisles of the church with agitated steps. No person could imagine what had happened to him. I did not venture to ask him the reason for such a sudden change in his disposition, as I could not now treat him with that familiarity I did formerly. With so much more impatience, therefore, did I expect the arrival of Biondello, that he might explain to me the mystery.

It was past ten o'clock before he came back. The ac-

counts which he brought to the Prince did not contribute to dissipate the gloom of melancholy. He returned to the pavilion apparently uneasy and dissatisfied. Soon after, the boat was ordered, and we went home. I could not find a single opportunity the whole evening to speak with Biondello; and I was at last obliged to go to bed without being able to satisfy my curiosity. The Prince dismissed us very early; but a thousand unpleasant reflections which tormented me kept me awake. I could distinctly hear the Prince walking up and down his chamber till a late hour; at last I dropped into a dose, but was soon roused from slumber by a person who appeared at my bedside with a lamp in his hand. When I looked up, I discovered it to be the Prince. He could not close his eyes, he said, and begged of me to pass the night with him. I would have risen and dressed myself; but he commanded me to remain as I was, and seated himself on my bed.

“An extraordinary circumstance has happened to me to-day,” said he, “and the impression it has made upon my mind will never be effaced. I went, as you must recollect, to see *** church, to which Civitella directed my attention, and which had at a distance excited my curiosity. As neither you nor he were present, I went in alone, and bade Biondello wait for me at the entrance. The church was quite dark and solitary. The aisles were cold and damp. I felt a sudden chillness steal all over me; I saw myself alone amidst the dead, in a sanctuary where a solemn silence, as in the grave, reigned in every part. I placed myself in the middle of the dome, and gave my soul up to contemplation. Soon, however, the gothic beauty of the building arrested my attention. It appeared, as I examined it, more and more delightful. It called forth the powers of awful meditation. The evening bell was tolling; its hollow sound, as I heard it faintly in the aisle, overpowered me with an unusual melancholy. Some altar-pieces at a distance attracted my attention. I went nearer, to view them distinctly: unperceived, I had wandered through the aisles of the church, and was approaching the end, when, by accident, I went round a pillar up a flight of steps, which lead into a side chapel, decorated with several little altars

and statues of saints. As soon as I entered the chapel I heard a soft whispering, turned towards the spot from whence I heard the voice, and about two steps from me discovered a female figure. Fright almost overpowered me; but after a few moments had elapsed I recovered, and contemplated an object which I cannot describe with justice."

"And does your Highness know for certain that it was alive—that it was not fancy—a picture of the brain?"

"Hear farther—it was a lady. Until that moment I had never regarded the sex! The rays of the setting sun, that illumined the chapel, enabled me to observe that she was in the act of praying before an altar. Nature seemed to have lavished all her perfections on her lovely form. She was elegantly dressed in black silk, which spread around her in large folds like a Spanish robe; her long light-coloured hair burst from under the veil, and flowed in charming disorder down her back; one of her hands touched the crucifix, as she rested her head upon the other. But how shall I find words to describe to you the angelic beauty of her countenance! The sunbeams played upon it, and heightened the divine expression that seemed to glow in it. Can you call back to your mind the Madonna of Florence? She was the exact copy of the artless enchanting beauty which is so irresistibly expressed in that picture."

Of the Madonna of which the Prince speaks, the case is this:—Shortly after your departure, the Prince became acquainted with a painter from Florence, who had been ordered to Venice to paint an altar-piece for a church; his name I do not now remember. He brought with him three pictures, which he had executed for the gallery in the Canarian Palace. The subjects were a Madonna, a Heloise, and a Venus in dishabille. From the exquisite manner in which they were all painted, it was almost impossible to decide which was superior in beauty. The Prince alone did not hesitate a moment to decide; they were scarcely put before him when the Madonna attracted his whole attention; in both the others the genius of the painter was admired, but this he surveyed with enthusiasm. He was so enamoured with it, that he could not be persuaded to quit it. The artist, we could perceive by his countenance, enjoyed

the judgment of the Prince ; he had the wit not to separate the three pictures, and demanded 1500 zequins for them. The Prince offered him half the price for the Madonna. The artist insisted upon his demand ; and who knows what might have happened if he had not found a purchaser for his works ? Two hours after, all the three pieces were gone ; and we have not seen them since. This was the picture that the Prince brought to his memory.

“ I stood,” he continued, “ in silent admiration. She did not observe me ; she was not disturbed by my arrival ; so entirely was she lost in adoration. She prayed to her God, and I prayed to her eyes ; saints, altars, or burning tapers, had never before reminded me that I was in a sanctuary ; I was seized with enthusiasm. Shall I confess to you, that I believed, from that very moment, in the influence of the crucifix she held in her beautiful hand. I read our Saviour’s answer in her eyes. Thanks to her charming piety ! she painted his true character to me. My ideas wandered with her’s through the ways of heaven. She rose, and I stepped aside with embarrassment ; the noise I made discovered me. The unexpected appearance of a man alarmed her ; I was fearful that my boldness might offend ; for as she glanced at me, the beauteous rays of innocence and virtue played upon her countenance. As she rose from prayer, I was the first happy creature which offered itself to her sight. In an adjoining corner of the chapel, I saw an elderly lady rise from her seat, and come towards us. I had not till then perceived her. She was but a few steps distant from me, and no doubt had witnessed all my actions. I was somewhat confused — I cast my eyes as it were involuntarily on the ground, and they rushed by me. I looked after her as she passed along the aisle. The beautiful figure was with her — What grace, what majesty appeared in all her steps ! She was no longer the being that I first beheld ; no, she was possessed of a thousand new charms. I followed at a distance with trembling steps, undetermined whether I should overtake her or not. I waited with impatience to see if she would bestow upon me another look ; — for the one she gave me as she passed by was lost upon me. With what extreme anxiety did I expect it !

"They stopped suddenly; but I was not able to set a foot forwards. The elderly lady, who perhaps might be her mother, observed the disorder of her hair, and immediately adjusted it. That done, they approached the gate. I doubled my steps—she disappeared by degrees—I could only see the shadow of her robe as it floated in the air. A flower had fallen from her bosom; she returned in haste to fetch it—she once more looked back, and—after me!—whom else could she seek in a place so solitary? She appeared as if I was no longer a stranger to her;—but she deserted me like the flower which seemed unworthy to be replaced in her bosom. Dear F—— I am almost ashamed to own to you with what childish rapture I interpreted that look—that last expressive look, which was not perhaps designed for me!"

"You may rely upon it, it was."

"It is singular," said the Prince, after a long silence, "that we should lament the loss of an object we never saw before—but I feel as if I exist only for her. That in a single moment man should display two such opposite characters? I look back upon the happiness I received yesterday morning with all that exquisite feeling with which we trace the days of childhood. This picture lives in my remembrance, and forces me to acknowledge that it is my god!" "Recollect, gracious Sir," said I, "in what gloomy thoughtfulness your mind was wrapt when this ideal divinity appeared to you; the association of ideas alone inflamed your imagination. Quitting the beautiful light of day, and the tumult of the world, you were suddenly surrounded by darkness and silence, impressed with sensations which, as you confessed yourself, tended to impress you with melancholy, whilst the majesty of the structure, and the contemplation of beauty in the works of different artists, aided the train of ideas you were supporting. In the mean time, alone and solitary; you gave yourself up to reflection; in the midst of your meditations you observe the figure of a female, where you did not expect to meet a soul—still more enchanting by a fine form, which was heightened by a favourable illumination of the setting sun—a fortunate situation, and a

captivating display of piety — what is more likely than that your disturbed fancy deceived you?"

"Can memory give back impressions it has never received? In my whole country there is nothing that I could justly put in comparison with that picture. Entire and unchanged, as in the moment of beholding it, it lies in my memory; I can think of nothing but that picture — and in vain might you offer me a whole world for it!"

"Gracious Prince, this is love." "Must it then be by a name that I am to be made happy? Love! — Do not think so meanly of my feelings as to accuse me of that which influences a thousand feeble souls! Who has ever felt what I endure! Such a being as I am never was in existence before! How then can you give my sensations a name? It is a new and singular suffering, originating with her that I adore. — Love! No, from love I am quite secure!" "You sent Biondello, no doubt, to find out the path your fair unknown pursued, and to get some information of her — What accounts did he bring you back?"

"Biondello has discovered nothing. He found her at the church gate. An old well-dressed man (who had the appearance of a citizen from this city, and not a servant) conducted her to the boat. Some poor peasants smiled upon her as she passed them, and she rewarded them with money. By this means one of her hands became visible; it was ornamented with several precious stones. She said something to her companion, which Biondello did not understand; he maintained it to be Greek. She had to walk a considerable distance to the canal. The people began to collect round her; so extraordinary a sight surprised all the peasants. Nobody knew her — but beauty is born a queen. All made way for her in an humble submissive manner. She let fall a black veil over her face, and hastened into the boat. To the extent of the channel of the Giudecca, Biondello kept the boat in sight, but could not pursue its course farther, owing to the concourse of people."

"Has he not taken notice of the waterman?" "He endeavoured in vain to find him; for it was not one of them with whom he is connected. The poor people of whom

he enquired could give him no other account, than that the lady for several weeks past had landed on the same spot on a Sunday evening, when she distributed some gold pieces amongst them. They were Dutch ducats, which I discovered by one that Biondello had procured."

"A Greek lady of fortune and rank, as it should seem by your description. That is quite sufficient, gracious Sir, to aid us in a discovery. But a Greek lady and in a catholic church!" "Why not? She may have changed her religion. But I admit there is something in all this that we do not understand. Why does she come only once a week? Why only on a Sunday evening, at an hour when the church is entirely deserted, as Biondello told me? — Next Sunday evening must decide this. But till then, my dear friend, assist me in the difficult task of passing away the time! Days and hours will elapse in their ordinary course, but are of too long duration for a mind like mine." "And when that day arrives — what is to be done?" "What is to be done? I shall see her again. I shall discover who she is, and the place of her residence. Why should I be unhappy, when I know how to alleviate my sufferings?" "But our departure from Venice, which is fixed for the beginning of next month?" "Could I imagine that Venice contained such a treasure! I will not think of my past life, but date my existence from this hour."

I thought this a favourable opportunity of keeping my word with the Marquis. I gave the Prince to understand, that for him to continue at Venice in the present state of our finances would by no means be proper; and that, if he prolonged his stay beyond the term, he could not expect that his court would support him. I now discovered a secret which till then had been unknown to me, that he received succours clandestinely from his sister, the reigning Princess of —, which she is very willing to increase if his court should abandon him. This sister is a pious fanatic, you know, and thinks the great savings which she makes at a very economical court cannot be disposed of better than to a brother whose character she enthusiastically venerates. I was confident, some time back, that there existed a good understanding between them, and that many

letters had been exchanged ; but as the Prince's own resources were sufficient to defray his expenses, I never once thought of this secret channel. It was now clear that the Prince had expenses which were unknown to me : these still remain a secret ; and if I may conclude from what I know of his character, they are not of that nature which will disgrace him. I was certain now that I had found him out. I did not therefore hesitate to make known to him immediately the offer of the Marquis, which, to my great astonishment, was accepted without any difficulty. He gave me free liberty to conduct the business with the Marquis in such a manner as I thought, best, and then ordered me to dismiss the usurer, and write immediately to his sister.

It was daybreak when we separated. This event has made me very uneasy for more reasons than one, particularly that it compels us to prolong our stay at Venice. This sudden passion for the unknown lady I expect will rather be of service to him than otherwise. She will perhaps be the means of reclaiming the Prince. I hope it will affect him in the ordinary way with a slight illness, and so eradicate his prejudices. Farewell, my dear friend. I have written this letter on the spur of the moment. The post is about to depart. You will receive this letter with the foregoing one on the same day.

The same to the same.

July 20.

This Civitella is one of the most serviceable men in the world. The Prince had not long left me when a note arrived from the Marquis, in which he politely reminded me of my promise. I sent him immediately a bond, executed by the Prince for six thousand zechins ; in less than half an hour it was returned, with an enclosed draught for double the sum. The Prince accepted it, but insisted that the bond should be given in return, which was only for the space of six weeks.

This whole week has been spent in enquiries after the mysterious Greek lady. Biondello put his machines in motion ; but all were fruitless. He has indeed found the

waterman ; but he could learn nothing farther from him, than that he had set both the ladies on shore upon the island of Murano, where two chairs waited for them. He supposed her to be an English lady, because she spoke a foreign language, and paid him in gold. He did not know her conductor, but he appeared to him to be a looking-glass manufacturer from Murano. We were now convinced that we had not to seek for her in the Giudecca, and that she was probably at home upon the island of Murano ; but the misfortune was, that, from the description which the Prince gave of her, she could not be known by a third person. The impassioned frenzy which seized him at the moment hindered him from observing her minutely. To that to which other people would have principally directed their attention, he was quite blind. After such a description as his, one might have sought for her in Ariosto or Tasso with more probability than upon a Venetian island. His enquiries must be made with the greatest secrecy and precaution, to prevent impeaching the virtue of the lady ; and as Biondello was the only person besides the Prince who had seen her through the veil, and therefore could know her again, they sought together for her in all places where it was thought possible that she could be. The life of this good-tempered man was this week spent in traversing all the streets of Venice. In the Greek church he made particular enquiries, but all to no purpose ; and the Prince, although more and more impatient at every disappointment, was at last obliged to comfort himself till the next Sunday evening.

His impatience was pitiable. Nothing pleased him—nothing excited his attention. His hours were spent in anxiety and distress : he fled from society, but the evil increased in solitude. He was never more surrounded by visitors than he was this week. His departure had been announced as near at hand—all pressed themselves upon him. Being obliged to entertain those people, to avoid all suspicion, we contrived to occupy his mind in order that we might dissipate his melancholy. In this situation Civitella hit upon gaming ; and to detain the company, he proposed to stake very high. In the mean time he flattered

himself that he should tempt the Prince to play, which he thought would very soon conquer his romantic ideas. This scheme, although hazardous, they knew could not injure him, as they had it in their power to desist at any time from playing.

“Cards,” said the Marquis, “have often prevented me from pursuing follies which I anticipated, and relieved me from reflecting upon those I had committed. The tranquillity of mind which a pair of charming eyes deprive me of, I have very often found again at the faro table; and women never had half the effect upon my spirits as not being enabled to play from poverty.”

I consented, in as far as I thought Civitella might be in the right; but the means which we instituted began soon to become more dangerous than the evil we endeavoured to destroy. The Prince, who thought to make the game attractive by betting very high, found very soon no bounds to it. He was quite out of his element. What he did was with apparent indifference, although his actions betrayed impatience and uneasiness of mind. You know how indifferent he is about money, and now he became totally insensible of its value. Gold pieces ran away like water. He lost almost upon every card, because he played without paying any attention. He forfeited large sums, because he ventured like a desperate, unfortunate man.—Dear O——, I communicate this with an aching heart: in four days we had not any of the twelve thousand zechins. Do not reproach me. I accuse myself sufficiently. But could I prevent it? Could I oblige the Prince to listen to me? Could I do more than remonstrate with him? I did what lay in my power: surely I may say, that I am not guilty. Civitella also lost. I won six hundred zechins! The unexampled misfortune of the Prince was observed by all, and for that very reason he would not abandon the game. Civitella, who likes to show his readiness to oblige him, lent him immediately the required sums.

This scene is closed; but the Prince is indebted to the Marquis twenty-four thousand zechins. Oh how I long for the spare money of his pious sister! If all princes acted thus, my dear friend! His Highness behaves towards

the Marquis as if he had done him the greatest honour, and thus he plays his part very well. Civitella sought to console me, by saying, that he thought his extraordinary ill luck would powerfully assist in bringing the Prince back again to reason. As for the money, he was not anxious about it. He himself did not miss it—three times as much was at the Prince's service. The Cardinal also assured me, that the sentiments of his nephew were sincere, and that he was always ready to support him in them. The worst was, that these extraordinary sacrifices did not at all affect him. One would think the Prince at least had played with some intent: but it was not so. The passion which we endeavoured to destroy seemed only to increase with ill luck: when a great sum was staked, all pressed around his chair with expectation, but his eyes were watching for Biondello, to steal from his looks the news which he might have for him. Biondello always returned unsuccessful, and he as continually lost. The money at last fell into very distressed hands. Some poor noblemen, who report says are supported by the alms they obtain in the market-place, came into the house perfect beggars, and left it as rich as Jews. Civitella pointed them out to me.

“Behold,” said he, “how many poor devils this money is of service to; how comes it then that men of wit do not direct their attention to such practices? This circumstance pleases me: it is princely. A great man may sometimes, by his errors, make people happy, and like a bounteous stream enrich the neighbouring fields by overflowing its banks.” Civitella's ideas are noble—but the Prince owes him 24,000 zechins.

At last the long expected Sunday evening arrived, and my master could not be prevented from walking in the afternoon in the * * * church. His stand was taken exactly upon the same spot in the chapel where he had seen for the first time the unknown that had captivated him, yet so that he could not immediately be seen by her. Biondello was ordered to keep watch near the church gate, and to form a connection with the attendants of the lady. I had determined to step, as by accident, into the boat at its return, to trace the unknown farther, if the first scheme should not

succeed. At the place where, upon the report of the watermen, she landed, we hired two chairs, and the Prince commanded the chamberlain Z—— to follow in a separate boat, and he himself would meet her in the church, and try his fortune there first. Civitella did not assist us, because he had already acquired a bad character with the females at Venice, and therefore he determined not to make the lady mistrust his friend by his presence. You see, my dear Count, that it could not be for want of plans, if the beautiful unknown escaped us. Never was there offered up in a church more sanguine prayers for success, nor greater hopes created, and never was man deceived more cruelly. The Prince waited till sunset. He trembled at every noise that approached the chapel: the creaking of every church-door increased his anxiety. Seven long hours passed, and no Greek lady arrived. I say nothing of the state of his mind. You know well what it is to be disappointed in the attainment of an object for which one has sighed seven days and nights.

The same to the same.

August.

No, my dear friend, you wrong the good Biondello. Indeed you entertain a false suspicion of him. I give up to your prejudices all Italians; but this man is honest. You think it singular that a man of such brilliant talents, and conduct without example, should hire himself as a servant, if he had no secret ends to answer; and from that you draw the conclusion that he is a suspicious character. How! Is it then so extraordinary that a man of talents should make himself respected by a prince, in whose power it is to advance his fortune? Is it dishonourable to serve him? Does not Biondello clearly show that his attachment to the Prince is personal? He has already confessed to him that he has a particular favour to ask of him, and which, when known, will undoubtedly unravel all the secret. He perhaps has entered into his service with some particular view; but may it not be innocent? It appears strange to you that this Biondello, when you were present, did not display the great talents which he now seems to be possessed of. That is true; but he had not then an opportunity to dis-

tinguish himself? The Prince did not at that time want him, and his other qualities were discovered in him by accident. But we experienced not long ago a proof of his sincerity, which will remove all your doubts. The Prince of late has been very particularly noticed. Endeavours are made to obtain a secret knowledge of his manner of life, and of his acquaintance. I know not for what reason those enquiries are made; but attend to what I shall communicate.

There is at St. George a public-house, to which Biondello often resorts. He may have some love-intrigue there for aught I know. He was there for several days in the company of advocates, men in office under the government, merry brothers and old acquaintances. They were equally astonished and rejoiced to behold him again. The former friendship was renewed, and every one related his adventures since their separation. Biondello also told his. He did it in a few words. They wished him joy of his new situation: they had heard of the splendid manner in which the Prince lived; of his liberality in particular towards his people that knew how to keep a secret; his acquaintance with the Cardinal A—— was also well known; and his partiality for gaming, &c. &c. Biondello started. They told him, that he played his part very well, but they said they knew that he was the secret messenger of the Prince. The advocates sat on each side of him, and the bottle was speedily emptied. They persuaded him to drink more: he excused himself, and said that his head would not bear much wine; he therefore affected to be intoxicated. "Yes," said one of the advocates at last, "Biondello may understand his business; but he has not yet finished his lesson—he is but half a scholar." "What is wanting?" said Biondello. "He understands one art," said the man; "that is, to keep a secret; but he is not acquainted with the other, which is, to get rid of it again with profit." "Am I likely to find a purchaser for it?" asked Biondello.

The other part of the company left the room, and he remained alone with his two friends, who now came to the point. To make it short, he was to give them the means by which the Prince became acquainted with the Cardinal

and his nephew, to discover to them the sources by which the Prince received, and the way he exhausted his money, and to deliver into their hands the letters which were written to the Count O——. Biondello appointed to meet them, and discuss it another time: who it was that induced them to do this he could not get from them, but concluded, from the great offers which were made to him, that it must be some wealthy person who commissioned them to entice him to this confession. Last night he discovered to my master the whole of this affair. He was anxious to imprison the advocates; but Biondello remonstrated, and said, if they were ever to be at liberty again, he should lose all his credit with that class of people, and perhaps his life. These sort of people all hang together, and stand up for each other. He would sooner, he said, have the high council at Venice for his enemy than be looked upon by them as a betrayer; and he could not be so useful to the Prince, if he lost the confidence of these people. We tried to conjecture with whom this curiosity might originate. Who is there at Venice that can be interested in knowing what my master receives and spends; what concerns he has with the Cardinal A——, and what I write to you? Is this a scheme of the Prince — d——? or is the Armenian with us again?

The same to the same.

August.

The Prince abounds in happiness and love. He has found the Greek lady. Hear how this happened. A stranger who had travelled over Chiozza, and gave an enchanting description of that beautiful city, which is situated near the Gulf, made the Prince desirous to see it. Yesterday his wishes were put in execution; and to avoid all unnecessary expense, no other person attended him but Z——, Biondello, and myself, as he travelled incognito. We took places in a boat that usually sailed to that place with company. The society was not very select, and the voyage far from being agreeable. Chiozza is built upon piles, like Venice, and has about forty thousand inhabitants. You meet there very few people of distinction; the streets are crowded with fishermen

and sailors. He who wears a wig and a mantle is called a rich man ; lappels and veils are the sign of poverty. The city itself is handsome, but to admire it, you must not have seen Venice.

The waterman, who had more passengers to carry, was obliged to be quick in his return to Venice, and nothing at Chiozza particularly attracted the notice of the Prince. The vessel was full when we arrived. As the company was rather troublesome on our passage thither, we hired a separate room for our better accommodation. The Prince enquired, who were the other passengers ? A Dominican, was the answer, and several ladies. My master was not at all curious to see them, and immediately went to his room. The Greek lady was the sole object of our discourse on our passage, and it was the same on our return. The Prince repeated his adventure in the church in the highest transports of delight ; the time was passed in forming plans, and then rejecting them ; till, before we were aware of it, Venice was in sight. Some of the passengers left the vessel, the Dominican was amongst them. The waterman went to the ladies, who, as we now learned, had been only separated from us by a thin partition. He asked them, where he should land them. " Upon the island of Murano," was the answer.—" The island of Murano !" cried the Prince, as the sudden transport of joy shot through his soul. Before I could make him any answer, Biondello rushed in.

" Do you know with whom we have travelled ? " — The Prince started up—" Is she here ? " " Yes, she is," continued Biondello. " I am just come from her conductor." The Prince rushed out of the room. A thousand sensations overpowered his mind. He was seized with a sudden trembling : a deathlike paleness spread itself over his countenance. I burned with expectation. It is impossible for me to describe to you our situation.

The boat stopped at Murano. The Prince jumped upon the shore. She came. I perceived, from the Prince's countenance, that it was she. Her appearance did not leave any doubt of the fact. A more beautiful figure I never saw : the flattering descriptions the Prince had given of her, were fully realised. A blush of satisfaction was

spread over her face, when she beheld the Prince. She must have overheard our whole conversation, and could not doubt that she had been the subject of it. She gave her attendant a significant look, which seemed to say, "This is he!" and with an artless embarrassment she cast her eyes upon the ground. A small board was placed from the shore to the ship, on which she had to walk. She seemed anxious to land; but although she affected timidity, it appeared to arise more from a desire to be assisted, than from the danger of crossing the plank. The Prince stretched out his arm to assist her. Necessity overcame etiquette. She accepted his hand, and leaped upon the shore. The sudden agitation of the Prince made him uncivil; for he forgot the other lady, who waited for the same act of politeness — And what would he not have forgotten in that moment? I at last rendered her that service, and deprived myself of the pleasure of observing how the interview, which took place between my master and the lady, affected her. He still held her hand in his; and, I believe, without knowing that he did so.

"It is not the first time, Signora, that — that —" He hesitated. "I ought to remember," she lisped. "In the church," said he. "Yes," said she, "it was there." "And could I flatter myself to-day — so near." Here she drew her hand softly out of his. He recovered himself immediately. Biondello, who in the mean time had spoken with the servant, came to his assistance. "Signora," he began, "the ladies ordered their chairs to be waiting for them at a certain time, but we have arrived here sooner than was expected. Here is a garden in the vicinity, where you may retire to avoid the tumult." The proposal was accepted, and you may judge with what delight the Prince accompanied her. They remained in the garden till late in the evening. It fell to my lot, assisted by Z——, to entertain the old lady, that the Prince might remain undisturbed with his beloved. He made good use of his time, for he obtained permission to pay her a visit. He is now there. As soon as he returns, I shall know more of the matter.

Yesterday, when we came home, we found the expected remittances from our court, but accompanied by a letter,

which affected my master very much. He is recalled by it, and in a tone which he has not been accustomed to. He has answered it contemptuously, and intends to prolong his stay here. The remittances are just sufficient to pay the interest of the capital which he owes. We look for an answer from his sister with great anxiety.

The same to the same.

September.

The Prince has had a quarrel with his court: all our resources from thence are cut off. The six weeks, which were limited for my master to have paid the debt due to the Marquis, are elapsed; we have received no remittances from his cousin, whom he earnestly solicited to assist him; neither have we had any from his sister. You may easily imagine that Civitella does not remind him of his engagement; but the faithful memory of the Prince continually imposes upon him the idea, that he is still the Marquis's debtor. Yesterday came letters from the reigning Count. We had just concluded a new contract with the master of our hotel; and the Prince had openly declared, that he intended to protract his stay in Venice. Without speaking a word, he gave me the letter. His eyes darted fire: to me his countenance was a sufficient indication of the contents. Should you imagine, dear O——, that they are at *** informed of all my master's connections; and that calumny has been very busy in inventing falsehoods to defame him?

They had heard with displeasure, it is said in the letter, that the Prince had not supported his former character, but had pursued a conduct which was in total contradiction to his former praiseworthy manner of thinking. They affirmed that he rioted with women, and was addicted to gaming in an extravagant manner; that he was involved in debt; that he studied physiognomy, and sought after conjurors; that he held suspicious correspondence with prelates, and that he possessed a household which was more than his income could support. They had even been assured that it was his intention to complete his bad conduct by turning an apostate, and embracing the Roman catholic religion; and, to exculpate himself from the last serious

accusation, they expected he would immediately return. A banker at Venice, to whom he was directed to deliver in the amount of his debts, was authorised, immediately after his departure, to satisfy his creditors; for, under circumstances so unpleasant, they did not think it safe to trust the money in his own hands. What accusations! and in what an artful manner alleged! I took the letter, and read it over a second time—I endeavoured to palliate the offence, but I did not succeed.

Z—— now reminded me of the secret enquiries which had been made by the advocates. The time, the contents, all circumstances agreed. We had falsely attributed them to the Armenian. Now it was clear from whom they were derived. Apostasy!—But whose interest can it be to calumniate my master in such an execrable manner? I fear it is a piece of mischief invented by the Prince—d—, who will follow it up, to get my master from Venice. He remained silent, with his eyes fixed upon the ground. His countenance made me tremble. I threw myself at his feet. “For Heaven’s sake, gracious Prince,” I exclaimed, “do not think of it so seriously. You shall, you will, have the greatest satisfaction. Leave the business to me. Send me there, for it is beneath your dignity to go personally to justify yourself against such vile calumnies: permit me to do it. The calumniator must, he shall, be named, and the eyes of the *** must be opened.

In this situation Civitella found us: he asked, with astonishment, the reason of our embarrassment. Z—— and I were silent. The Prince, who never made any distinction between him and us, was now too much agitated in his mind to act prudently on this occasion, and commanded us to communicate to him the contents of the letter. I hesitated, but the Prince snatched it from my hands, and gave it to the Marquis himself. I am your debtor, Marquis,” he began, after he had finished the letter, “but let that give you no uneasiness. “Allow me but a respite of twenty days, and you shall be paid.” “Gracious Prince!” exclaimed Civitella, with feeling and surprise, “do I deserve this?” “You did not choose to remind me of my engagement. I know your delicacy in this matter, and

thank you for your liberality. In twenty days, as I said before, you shall be paid." "What is the meaning of all this?" said Civitella with anxiety. "Explain to me this mystery. I cannot comprehend it."

We gave him all the information in our power. He fell into a rage. The Prince, he said, must insist upon satisfaction: the offence is infamous. In the mean time, he conjured the Prince to make use of his property and credit as if they were his own. The Marquis left us, and the Prince still continued silent. He walked with hasty steps up and down the room: something of an extraordinary nature seemed to oppress his senses. At last he stood still, and murmured incoherently — "Wish yourself happiness — at nine o'clock he died."

We looked at him with horror. "Wish yourself happiness," he continued. "Happiness — Did he not say so? What was it that he meant by these words?" "Why do you now repeat that foolish admonition?" I exclaimed; "What has this to do with it?" "I could not then understand what the Armenian meant by that expression. Now I comprehend him. Oh, it is intolerably hard to have a master over one!" "My dearest Prince!" "Who can make me experience it! — Ah! it must be exquisite!"

He stopped again. There was in his countenance a wildness resembling insanity. I never before had seen him so much agitated. "The most miserable among the people," he continued, "or the next Prince to the throne! are the same. There is but one distinction among men — to obey or to govern." He once more looked into the letter. "You have seen the man," he continued, "who has ventured to write thus to me. Would you salute him in the street if fate had not made him your master? By heavens! there is something wonderfully great about the wearer of a crown!" He continued speaking in this unintelligible manner for some time, and many of his words I dare not commit to paper. But the Prince has discovered to me a circumstance, which involved me in surprise and anxiety, and which may probably ere long lead to bad consequences. We were ignorant of the family circumstances at the court of * * * until now. The Prince

answered the letter upon the spot, though I opposed it with violence, and the manner in which he has done it will, in all probability, prevent a reconciliation.

You will also be desirous, dear O—— to hear something about the Greek lady. I can say but little upon that subject, as I am not able at present to learn any thing satisfactory concerning her. The Prince discloses nothing, because he is, no doubt, bound to secrecy, as I presume, by his word of honour. But she is not the Greek lady that we supposed. She is a German of noble extraction. It is reported that she has a mother of rank, and also that she is the fruit of an illicit connection, of which much was said in Europe. Clandestine pursuits, it is said, have forced her to seek refuge at Venice; and these also are the reasons why she avoids society, and secretes herself in a private dwelling, where it would have been impossible for the Prince to have discovered her. The veneration with which the Prince speaks of her, and certain traits which he observes in her conduct, seem to authorise this presumption. He is passionately fond of her, and his attachment increases every day. In the first outset the visits were not repeated very often; however, the second week the interval was shortened, and now not a day passes without the Prince's being there. We are not able to see him sometimes for whole evenings together; and even, if he is not in her society, she is the only object that occupies his attention. His nature seems to be changed. He walks about like a madman: he is inattentive to every thing that formerly interested him.

What will be the consequence, dearest friend, I cannot imagine. The quarrel with his court has thrown my master into the degrading situation of being dependent upon an individual, the Marquis Civitella. He is at present master of all our secrets, and perhaps of our fate. Will he always think so nobly as he does at present? Will this good understanding be of long duration? and is it right to give so much power and consequence to a man, let him be ever so excellent a character? A letter has been despatched to the sister of the Prince. The issue of it I hope to communicate to you in my next letter.

The Count O——, in continuation.

But this promised letter never arrived. Three whole months passed over, before I obtained any farther accounts from Venice ; an interruption which is explained in the sequel. All the letters of my friend to me had been suppressed. You may guess the situation of my mind, when, in the month of December, I obtained the following writing, which mere accident (Biondello's illness) brought to my hands.

" You do not write. You do not answer.—Come—Oh, come upon the wings of friendship. Our hope is gone. Read this with resolution. All our hope is gone. The Marquis's wound is mortal. The Cardinal cries for revenge, and his assassins seek the Prince's life. My master—Oh, my unhappy master ! Is it come to this ? Unworthy, terrible fate ! We must fly like criminals from the poniards of murderers. I write to you from the Convent ***, where the Prince has taken refuge. He is lying asleep upon a mattress by my side. Alas ! it is the slumber of exhausted nature, which will soon again resign him to the horror of new sufferings. During the ten days that she was ill, no sleep closed his eyes. I was present at the dissection of the body. They discovered traces of poison. To-day she will be buried.

" Alas, dear O——, my heart is almost broken. I was witness to a scene that never will be rooted from my memory. I stood by her dying bed. She expired with divine resignation, and her last words hailed her beloved to accompany her to the throne of heaven. All our resolution forsook us ; the Prince alone was firm and collected ; and though he must have suffered almost beyond description, yet he had fortitude enough to refuse the pious fanatic her last prayer."

In this was enclosed the following :—

*To the Prince ***, from his Sister.*

" The religion which the Prince *** has embraced will not let him want the means to continue his present mode of

life, which is to be attributed to that alone. I have tears and prayers for an unfortunate, but no more benefits for one unworthy of them.

“HENRIETTE.”

I set off immediately; and travelling night and day, in the third week I arrived at Venice. My haste was of no consequence. I went to comfort an unhappy being; but I found one who did not want my feeble assistance. F—— was very ill, and was not to be spoken with, when I arrived; they gave me, however, the following note:—

“Return, dear O——, to where you came from. The Prince does not want your assistance nor mine. His debts are paid, the Cardinal consoled, and the Marquis restored. Do you remember the Armenian who entrapped us last year so dexterously? In his power you’ll find the Prince; who has these five days attended mass.”

Notwithstanding this, I waited upon the Prince, but was refused admittance. On the bed of my friend, however, I heard the following extraordinary history. After taking my lodgings, not far from the Prince’s hotel, I was obliged to wait a long time before I could speak with my friend F——. He was indisposed with a fever, and the physician that attended him despaired of his recovery. My situation was afflicting in the extreme; for I beheld the Prince, as it were, upon the verge of a most terrible abyss, and my friend F—— on the brink of the grave. Harassed almost to death with misfortunes, I resolved, at all events, to speak once more with the prince; but I found, after several ineffectual attempts, that it was in vain; and the last visit I made I was dismissed with the following intimation:—“That the Prince was not to be spoken to by me, and that it was alone owing to his former attachment for me that I still enjoyed my liberty.”

Biondello, who told me this, added to the weight of his information, by his serious and strongly marked countenance. I was not able to make him any answer, but felt my knees shake under me, and my lips quiver in a convulsive manner. I went immediately to my lodgings, and, almost insensible with apprehension, threw myself into an arm chair,

and endeavoured to dispel the gloom of anticipation that hung over me. A noise brought me at last to myself; I looked up, and saw the physician who attended F—— standing before me, whom I had not heard enter the room during my perplexity. “I like to be myself the messenger of happy news,” said he to me, “and I come to announce to you, that your friend F—— finds himself so much recovered, that he is able to converse without difficulty, and wishes to speak to you; the cause of his illness seems to be entirely removed, but you must expect to see him weak, and rather low.” I did not suffer him to proceed in his speech, but wrapped myself up in a cloak, and hastened to congratulate my friend upon his recovery, with as much satisfaction as if the welfare of millions had depended upon my walk.

“Oh! how much have I sighed after you, my dear O——,” said he, with a feeble voice, as he pressed my hand to his breast; “but the physician conjured me, until now; to avoid all sensations.” I looked at him. He was lying before me the picture of death. A tear started from my eye; I could not suppress it: he observed it. “I thank you, my friend, for this sincere proof of affection; it convinces me that my loss will not be indifferent to you.” “Speak not of your death,” said I, with concern, “the physician assures me he has removed your complaint, and that in a little time you will be well again.” “Ay,” he replied, with a deep sigh, “he has repeatedly said so, but I think the contrary. My internal feelings prove to me that I cannot exist long in this world.”

He sank back on his pillow. A cold sweat stood upon his forehead. His speech became fainter by degrees; but I collected sufficient to understand, that he suspected some one had poisoned him, for that he and myself had been suspected for some time of having maliciously and secretly calumniated the Prince at court. This accounted for the cold and unfriendly treatment I had lately received from the Prince; and the very thought of being subject to so powerful an enemy threw me into a state of melancholy. I looked back upon my conduct, and tried to recollect any circumstance that might throw some light upon the matter, but in vain. In the midst of these reflections F——

awaked, which aroused me from my lethargy. His first word was to entreat me to be secret as to what he had discovered respecting himself, and persuaded me, fearful that a similar lot would befall me, to absent myself immediately after his death from Venice. He added, with a smile, "See me laid in my grave first, for I wish very much to receive that last service from the hand of a friend whom I affectionately love." I embraced him, and bedewed his death-pale cheek with tears. "I forgive those," he said, "who are the cause of my death; it will not be painful to me; and as you have not deprived me of your presence in my last hours, I owe you the greatest thanks."

A long pause ensued;—after that, F—— related to me as follows. I have collected into a narrative the sentences which he spoke at intervals, and added what I extorted from him by questions; for his feebleness did not permit him to speak in a continued series. I also was often obliged to assist him, on account of the defect of his memory, as far as it could be done by questions. I must be permitted to introduce him speaking here, because, of all that I communicate, nothing is done by me but the chronological arrangement. I have, indeed, given myself the trouble to use his own language, which I am enabled to do, as I had my pocket-book always in my hand, and carefully noted down every thing which I thought would slip from my memory.

"I begin," said F——, "my story from that period when my letters to you were intercepted. By the last of them* you know, that the Prince had fallen out with his court, and had nothing more to expect from thence. His sister did not write to him, and left us for the space of two months in an anxious state of uncertainty, when the letter, which I enclosed for you last, arrived. It threw the Prince into the most horrid state of distress. His debt to Civitella was very much increased, and his expenses were not in the least diminished; and we found there was not any probability of maintaining the system much longer.—I must confess to you, that at that period I seldom enjoyed a happy hour. In the most splendid entertainments I was solitary,

* That from the month of September. See the foregoing.

and sunk in deep reflection. Z—— contented himself as well as he could. If he was not obliged to be at home, from necessity, he seldom stayed with me; and if at any time I mentioned the subject of our distress to him, he never listened to me, but answered, that he did not choose to interfere in his master's concerns. I had no friend left; and from you I received no answers to my letters. The Prince was seldom to be seen, being in general occupied with Biondello, upon the management of his intrigues. He must have had no other thought than that of visiting the Greek lady, for he had already promised four times to the Marquis to pay him; but instead of that, he borrowed fresh sums. You know formerly with what strict punctuality he performed a promise; but at that period he was completely inattentive to it.

“It was as if every thing existed only for him, and that he had the sole right to command it. The Marquis still continued the generous, uninterested friend of the Prince, who studied his wishes, before they came to maturity, and sought, with unremitting zeal, to satisfy him in every particular. In his hands, I may say, our fate rested; and yet he knew how to give his conduct such a colour, that an indifferent person would have thought his existence depended upon a single look from the Prince. Thus stood the affair, when the Prince one evening came home very late from the *Bucentauro*. He brought a book with him, the contents of which he was so anxious to be acquainted with, that, during the time he was undressing, he desired me to read it out aloud to him; for Biondello, on whom this honour was usually conferred, under the pretext of indisposition, which he had complained of for fourteen nights, had been dismissed to go to bed. At last the Prince retired to rest, and being unable to repose until the book was finished, I was obliged to sit upon the side of his bed and continue my task. He listened very attentively, as he supported his head upon his right arm. The clock in the steeple of St. Mark's church struck one.* At that instant

* The Count O—— has probably given here the hour in which this happened, according to our reckoning of time; in Venice, and other provinces of Italy, they begin to count the hours from *one*, at the beginning of the night.

both the candles which stood before me upon the table were extinguished. We heard thunder, which in a few minutes became so violent, that the house seemed to shake under us; quick flashes of lightning illuminated our room, and immediately all the windows and doors burst open.

“‘*Beware, Prince!* that thou dost not stain thy hand with blood,’ cried a hollow frightful voice—Again it thundered and lightened, after which a solemn stillness reigned for some time.

“‘Is this a dream?’—cried the Prince, after a pause. I did not make any answer, and was in doubt whether I should quit the room or not. In the mean time Biondello rushed in. ‘For God’s sake, what is the matter?’ he exclaimed with trepidation; but, without waiting for an answer, he took the wax candles from the table, and brought them back lighted. He was half dressed, and appeared so dreadfully frightened, that I became very much alarmed for him. Observing that the Prince had not received any injury, he seemed in some measure comforted. The Prince asked him if he had heard any thing? He answered in the affirmative, and his relation accorded exactly with what we had heard; however, he did not see any lightning. He was not asleep, and for that reason his evidence effectually proved, that our imaginations had not deceived us. Biondello received orders to go to bed again, and the Prince commanded him to observe the strictest silence as to what he had heard and seen. ‘What do you think of this?’ said the Prince, as soon as he was gone. ‘I must own to you, gracious Prince,’ said I, ‘that this event has almost deprived me of my senses.’ ‘Confess, that you will not willingly believe it to be a miracle, because you know that I hold them in contempt.’ ‘And yet I know not how to explain it in a natural way.’ ‘We have read strange things in the book; how, if our fancy should have played us a trick?’ ‘But that we both heard one and the same thing, that the candles in the mean time were extinguished at the same moment, and doors and windows burst open, is certain; and Biondello has heard the same?’

“‘That might, perhaps, be explained. The windows burst open because they were not fastened; the door from

the same cause; the pressure of the air became then stronger, and the thorough draft put out the candles.' 'But the words we heard—the lightning—the thunder?' 'I ascribe them to imagination.' 'But could imagination work upon *three* different persons exactly at the *same* time, and in the *same* manner?' 'If all our ideas turn to the same point, why not?—Have you never heard, that whole societies have been deceived in the same manner? To what cause else can we ascribe the existence of so many fanatics?' 'I allow this; but Biondello's ideas could not surely be similar to ours, and yet—' 'It is possible. Have you not heard that he was lying awake in his bed, and in all probability listened to every thing that was said. Only a thin wainscot separates his room from mine, and you, besides, read with a very loud voice?'

"I became silent, not because I was convinced, but because I did not like to contradict him; for his countenance proved to me that he was angry at my disputing the question with him. He seemed satisfied, but the recollection of what had passed banished sleep from my eyes. The following day was destined for a grand feast, which was given in honour of the Prince of St. Benedetto. All that Venetian splendour and pleasure could invent was united here. It was to conclude with a very brilliant masquerade ball. A valet-de-chambre, whom the Prince a short time ago took into his service, because he saved his life, remained alone at home; whilst myself and the Prince's whole household, Biondello not excepted, who forgot his complaints to join the party, went to the entertainment. The Prince was pleased with his attention so much the more, because, in spite of his indisposition, he insisted upon going in such a manner that the greatest love for his Prince could only have induced him. In the mask of a Bramin he followed him every where, at a little distance, like his shadow. I did not suffer him to go out of my sight, because I expected something might take place, that might lead to a discovery of the mysterious warning we had heard the foregoing night; to which ground I also attributed the foresight of Biondello. My conjecture was but too well founded. The crowd of masks which were present, left little room in the spacious hall for the dancers;

thus, they were rather crowded. The Prince, in endeavouring to pass some one in great haste, tore a part of his garment. He was obliged to leave the hall immediately to repair the accident. Biondello conducted him into a side room, and I followed. Picture to yourself our astonishment, when we beheld, in a recess, the Greek lady and Civitella conversing together. Not one of us was able to utter a word. The Prince seemed thunderstruck : his eyes rolled wildly in his head, and the muscles of his face became convulsive. The couple apparently did not observe us. Before we could prevent him, the Prince seized a dagger, which lay upon a table, and rushing towards Civitella laid him bleeding at his feet. The Greek lady ran with loud shrieks into the hall.

“ ‘For God’s sake, save yourself, gracious Prince!’ exclaimed Biondello, ‘lose not a moment.’ At that instant he laid hold of the Prince, who was quite stupified, and hurried him away through a side-door. I hastened after them. Scarcely was the door closed, when we heard a great noise in the room. In their embarrassment they had probably forgotten to pursue us ; we therefore made our escape. The Prince wished to go to his hotel, but Biondello prevented him, and added that he could not be secure there. The powers above* punish very rigorously any one that attacks a mask ; and in spite of his rank, he was in doubt whether they would not to-morrow morning send after him one of their *fantes*†, which might have very bad consequences. He promised to conduct him to a place of security till the affair could be settled. Biondello walked before us with hasty steps ; we followed him very close, and I must confess, with great dread and anxiety. The apprehension played upon my fancy so much, that I saw at every step figures, which seemed to me all armed with daggers. From the Prince’s countenance, I easily could perceive, that he also was very much discouraged. Not one of us spoke a word. Like fugitive criminals we stole

* This expression, or, in his language, *quci in alto*, the Venetians use as a name for the tribunal of the Inquisition. A Venetian is so afraid of that word, that he makes use of it only in cases of great necessity, and speaks of this tribunal with the highest veneration and beating heart.

† An officer of this tribunal.

through the private passages and by-streets. We were fortunate enough to meet, near *St. Samuele*, a boat, which, to all appearance, seemed waiting for us. We stepped into it: Biondello commanded the boatman to row into the *Sestier* of *Castello*, and to land us near *St. Francisco della Vigna*, a Franciscan convent. We glided like lightning through the water. Houses and steeples that bordered the river soon vanished from our sight. The moon shone with beautiful splendour; and, at intervals, we heard the distant oars as they dashed into the stream, and the melancholy song of the *Barcarole*.*—I shall never forget the impression that night made upon my mind.

“We arrived, at last, at the before-mentioned place; and Biondello procured us, even at that time of night, through the means of an acquaintance, the best accommodation. We were obliged to live there in great secrecy, and I observed that the Prince deeply felt his situation. Biondello walked out in different masks to learn how the matter stood, and what the Prince had to fear; but for many days he returned without success. At last he came into the room, about night-fall, in great agitation. ‘We must depart hence,’ he cried with a trembling voice, ‘we must depart this moment! Your life hangs on a thread, my Prince! The Marquis is mortally wounded; the Cardinal has hired twelve assassins to murder you, and he who perpetrates the deed is promised one hundred sequins; a price which an assassin would be studious to earn, were it even to take the life of the head of the church. They already are acquainted with our abode—we must hasten away as quickly as possible!’

“Had not Biondello been with us, we could not possibly have escaped our fate; but this indefatigable and attentive man assisted us always with the best advice. He brought us clothes, as a disguise, and we hired a boat for our conveyance. Biondello entered into conversation with

* *Barcarole* are a kind of watermen. They sing for entertainment, whilst they are lying solitarily in their boats, expecting customers. They know by heart many passages of the poets, and add to them music of their own composition, which they endeavour to make adequate to the words. One is heard to begin; another, who perhaps does not know the first, hears, and answers him, and they seldom discontinue their song till their business calls them away.

the waterman, and we experienced, to our astonishment, in what great danger we were placed, and how industrious the assassins were to earn the hundred sequins. Suspecting that some one might be able, by the boatman, to trace our route, to deceive them, we continually changed our boat, and went a very circuitous way about. At last we arrived at the convent —. A friendly monk, also an acquaintance of Biondello, received us at the gate, and conducted us immediately to a room, which was retired and clean, but not furnished for the reception of a prince. ‘A lady, in the last agonies of death, wishes to speak to you,’ said the monk the next day to the Prince. He started as if he had suffered an electrical stroke. ‘Who is she?’ he exclaimed hastily. ‘I do not know; I have not enquired concerning that. She has lived for two years in this convent. Whence she came is unknown. It is our duty to receive every stranger, within our walls, without first asking who he is, or whence he comes.—We suffer every one to keep his secret, if he will not discover it to us willingly.’

“The Prince seemed lost in deep reflection. ‘How long has she been ill?’ he said at last. ‘To-day is the seventh.’ ‘Where is she? I will go to her.’ He followed the monk.

“In the sick room, my dear friend, was his Greek lady. I have forgotten to mention, that he had not an opportunity to speak to her for two days previous to the unhappy masquerade-ball; it was clear now what detained her. I myself saw her, and I am not able to describe my feelings, when I beheld the most charming creature in the creation, who was formerly the admiration of every one, but now the victim of horror and disease. Upon her lovely face were marked the signs of death. — I no longer doubted, that at the ball we must have been mistaken in the person; but the Prince, in total opposition to his former character, still entertained his doubts. This affected his sensibility to such a degree, that nothing could be equal to it. His ardent affection threw him into the most violent paroxysms of despair, when he saw the object of his heart in the arms of death; but, in a few minutes, the fatal scene at the ball

rushed upon his mind — he turned from her with disgust, impressed with the idea that she had treated his love with scorn. His eyes sparkled with rage, and, as in agony, his limbs trembled; but this, when he looked upon the patient innocent, was changed into sympathetic melancholy. His situation was terrible. Although she herself suffered very much, she sought to console him. This circumstance almost drove him to distraction. I tore him by force from her bed. He sat silent in our room for some time; at last he exclaimed — ‘I am shamefully deceived! She, whom I adored, despised me, and rioted licentiously in the arms of another.’

“ ‘Gracious Prince, be satisfied. All circumstances clearly prove, that she was lying ill here when the deed happened. It must have been quite a different person.’ ‘Did I not see her — I, who preserved in the sanctuary of my heart the smallest of her favours — I, who existed only for her, who thought her one and the same with myself — to be treated thus!’ — ‘Pardon me, gracious Prince, did you not say yourself, that under such circumstances, one might be easily deceived?’ ‘Did you not see her also?’ ‘Your rash action hindered us from observing her minutely.’ ‘And how came she to know that I was in the convent? The plan is finely laid to decoy me again into the net; but it will not succeed!’ ‘Do not mistrust her. — An unhappy affair brought us hither; and, meeting her in such a pitiable situation, must have operated strongly upon your mind, and —’ ‘Will you remind me of my weakness? I believed, from the first moment, that it was a juggle.’ ‘Her illness a juggle?’ ‘Is that impossible, after having had the experience that we have?’

“ I know not how long this conversation would have lasted; for the more I endeavoured to convince him of his error, so much the more he opposed me; and his understanding, formerly so enlightened, did not look upon what appeared the fact as at all probable. Biondello’s arrival prevented a continuation of our discourse. He did not, however, bring news of our being safe; yet the Prince became, in one respect, more composed. For, he said it was in several places reported, that the lady, on account of

whom we had suffered so much, was no other person than a certain V—lli, who was of an indifferent character, and extremely like the Greek lady. The similarity of the dress, and the darkness of the room in which they were sitting, served also to deceive us. How his beloved knew that he was in the convent, was also explained to his satisfaction. One of her footmen had discovered Biondello — she had often made particular enquiries after the Prince, and having discovered his retreat, desired once more to see and speak to her beloved. Conscious of her innocence, her sufferings made a greater impression upon the mind of the Prince. He very seldom quitted her bed, and gave himself up entirely to sorrow. The cause of her dissolution will also be that of mine.— Oh ! that I might die with the tranquillity that she did ! Her patience under her sufferings, her serenity of mind, when the shadows of death surrounded her, contributed to make her more beloved than ever. Oh ! that I might be certain of such a happy death as hers ! * This angel died by poison ; for, on the dissection of her body, at which I was obliged to be present, the clearest proofs of it were visible.†

“ The situation of the Prince I am not able to describe to you. I trembled for his safety ; for when he saw the corpse carried to the grave, he burst into a loud hysterical laugh, and, as in a fit of madness, uttered expressions that I never wish to recollect. Several days passed, in which nothing remarkable happened. Biondello’s accounts were always the same, and the Marquis had not yet recovered from his indisposition. We did not perceive that they were at all solicitous to discover us, although he assured us, that they had not yet given over the pursuit ; and that our safety depended upon our remaining quiet ; for their revenge would not be satisfied but by blood. For want of room I was obliged to sleep in the Prince’s apartment. It was about midnight when he came to my bedside and waked me.

“ ‘ Have you heard nothing ? ’ said he. — I replied in the negative, for I had slept very soundly, my rest having been

* This wish of my friend was fulfilled in every particular.

† He has already mentioned this in his last letter. See the foregoing.

broken the preceding night. ‘Has any thing happened to you, gracious Sir?’ ‘Had I not the proof in my hands, I should think it was a dream. It seems as if I am surrounded every where by invisible beings. I was just on the point of falling asleep, when I was disturbed by the most enchanting music. Whilst I listened to find whence the sound came, a genius appeared to descend through the upper part of my bed, graced with all the charms with which our painters usually represent them; but no pencil ever portrayed such a perfection of irresistible beauty. A soft light surrounded it, and illuminated my bed. I had drawn the curtain very close. The night lamp burnt faintly, and on witnessing this apparition, I reflected upon the former prophecy, which, alas! was so punctually fulfilled. I remained lost in astonishment and fear. With a melodious voice it spoke to me: — *My lord and master sends thee a letter; open and read it, but not before the first beam of the sun announces day, and conquer all disbelief!* He let fall a letter, and melted, as it were, into a cloud, which vanished by degrees. His disappearance was accompanied by the same agreeable music as announced his approach, and a rich perfume diffused itself around me.

“The Prince shewed me the letter. It was exactly like a common letter; only the seal consisted of several symbols, which we could not explain, and it was not directed. He put it into his pocket. ‘Will you not open it?’ said I. ‘To-morrow at the appointed hour.’ ‘You believe, then, in this apparition?’ He was silent for a while. ‘Must I not? — Oh! what would I give if I could but still doubt it, and persevere in that philosophy, of which I boasted so much! Now I must give up all. I believe now in every thing! Can I do otherwise, after what has happened to me?’

“He slept no more that night, but conversed of ghosts and supernatural appearances; and I soon experienced how much he inclined to believe in the possibility of them. At the appointed time he took the letter from his pocket, and, behold, there was a direction upon it! This, although a trifle, greatly astonished the Prince; and you may easily conceive how he was affected at the moment. He opened it. It was a mere cover; but there was enclosed a receipt

from Civitella, not only for the sums which he had lent to the Prince, but also for the interest ; and a letter from him of which I will give you a copy ; I transcribed it on account of its singularity :—

‘ My gracious Prince !

‘ The enormity of my crime is so great, that I ask of you forgiveness, and hope your heart will not deny it, as my repose and future happiness depend upon it. You punished my imprudence, at that unfortunate ball, by a severe blow ; and I, like a madman, suffered myself to be overcome by rage, and thirsted for revenge. After the abominable custom of this country, I begged of my uncle to hire a party of banditti to kill *you*—the saviour of my life. The thought oppresses me with horror ; but you, who gave the wound, were also able to cure it, and could have done it by one word !—Oh ! you, at whose command the higher powers wait, why do you fly from my weak unpardonable revenge, which you could have suppressed at pleasure ?—Why did you send me the sums of money, which I lent you with such satisfaction, thus to deprive me of the consolation, which you at first so nobly gave me ? Whilst you thought me worthy to share with you my fortune, you did not want it.—Oh ! act with generosity and forgive me, for, without that, my recovery will be to me the most unhappy period of my life. I cannot excuse my temerity ; no, I am not able to do it—but you will be less indignant at my conduct, if you consider that it is by education alone such a detestable self-revenge can be justified. Am I not by such appearances punished enough ?—Alas ! the recollection of it will never be rooted from my memory. As I lay upon my bed, suffering the most excruciating pain, and the bystanders expecting my death every moment, there appeared to me a figure, in a long black Tartar dress, and girded round the loins with a golden belt. It approached near to my bed : its white beard flowed upon its breast, and a penetrating frown sat upon its brow : it looked around, and immediately my attendants sunk to sleep. *Wretch !*—it cried, with a terrible voice—*who has ventured to persecute him with vengeance, who could instantly destroy thy*

life, if he would make use of the power he has in his hands? I will not repeat the dreadful remonstrance which I heard. It was a miracle that I did not expire under the agitation this appearance occasioned. Having struggled for some time in the most terrible torments, the figure touched me. I was instantly free from pain, and perfectly recovered. Before me, on the table, were lying heaps of gold, for which I was obliged to give a receipt. It also desired me to ask your pardon in writing, though I did not know where to address you, and upon which my whole welfare would depend. Oh! do not refuse your compassion to a miserable wretch.—When and how you will obtain this letter I do not know; but the spirit assured me that you would, for certain, have it. Alas, gracious Prince! return to me again. For, with sincere repentance, an unworthy being will wait upon you in the ante-chamber of your hotel, as soon as day breaks.

‘Your unworthy friend,
‘CIVITELLA.’

“What we felt on reading that letter I need not, dear O—— describe to you. It was an event which filled us with astonishment. The Prince did not doubt the fact; but he would not quit his haunt, without first having made all possible enquiry as to its authenticity. Biondello, who was still asleep, was called, and commissioned to enquire very cautiously into every circumstance. The voice immediately repeated,—‘Overcome your disbelief!’ Biondello crossed himself, and went off. He did not go far from the convent, for he heard from his spies, that we were perfectly safe; and he soon returned with this happy news. The Prince conjured us to be silent as to what had happened, and set off immediately. We arrived at the hotel, and found not only Civitella but also the Cardinal, who came towards the Prince, and, in the humblest manner, asked his pardon. That he forgave them willingly, and was highly satisfied to free himself from such a dangerous dilemma, is easily to be imagined. Nor did he undeceive them as to the idea, that higher powers were at his command, and that the ghost had appeared to Civitella by his

desire ; he only begged of them to keep it a secret. Civitella assured him that it was quite public, for the people who waited upon him knew it, and had already cried him up as a saint.

“ ‘But the people were asleep, how could they discover the vision?’ replied the Prince, with some doubt. ‘Yes, gracious Prince,’ said Civitella—‘but they saw the form descending into the room, and witnessed, on their recovering from their terror, my restoration. They saw me at the brink of the grave; and to be restored so suddenly, must have excited their astonishment; and can you blame me, that in the moment when I found myself snatched from the jaws of death, I called you, with gratitude, my benefactor?—You did not prohibit me to do it; and had that been the case, I believe I should have violated your commands. Oh! most gracious Prince! there is no greater pain than for an uncorrupted mind to suppress the feelings of a grateful heart!’ He threw himself at the feet of the Prince, whilst tears burst from his eyes. ‘I have already forgiven you,’ said the Prince, raising him from the ground. ‘But, am I beloved by you as formerly?—Am I not unworthy of it?’ he continued in tears. ‘When I forgive, I do it not by halves,’ said the Prince, embracing him.

“ Life now seemed to beam afresh in the Marquis. He did not even appear to have been at all ill, for he looked as healthy as ever; but a fixed melancholy, that was discernible in his countenance, extinguished those traces of benevolence which had formerly rendered him so attractive. But by this reconciliation he recovered his happy looks, and ran through the room in an excess of joy that indicated his felicity. After the first intoxication was over, he was overwhelmed with an agreeable anxiety, which did not at all belong to his character, and from which one could perceive how much he felt his indiscretion. This, and the solicitude which originated with it, made him more agreeable to the Prince, and he became to him as dear as ever: he understood the smallest hint; he sought to read in his eyes his most distant wishes, and soon learned how to regulate his conduct according to his desires; besides, he sufficiently understood how to give

his actions an air of duty, and continually exclaimed how much he owed to the Prince. Believing that the Prince's violence upon the night of the ball was nothing more than a punishment for his extravagancies—(for he did not conceive that the Prince had taken the lady that was with him for his Grecian)—he now altered his mode of life, and often thanked the Prince that he had punished him so severely. He declared that he was proud of it—that he esteemed him higher than ever, and thought him more worthy of his friendship. He candidly confessed to me, that he had at that time entertained an idea, which would in the end have been his ruin. He had laid a plan to seduce the daughter of the —t—io, a charming innocent girl of sixteen. He had seen her, for the first time, at mass, and her beauty impressed him with this resolution.

“To gain access to the house of her parents, and to succeed in this diabolical scheme, he was obliged to court the favour of the same lady with whom we had seen him at the ball, because she was a near relation to the family, and could easily introduce him. The strictness with which she was watched would have required him to commit a chain of crimes before he could have obtained his aim. His passion was so violent, that, united with his natural imprudence, he did not hesitate to adopt the most impolite manners to accomplish his purpose. At the brink of the grave, he added, a man reflects upon all his actions in another point of view; and even those that formerly gave him great pleasure, and upon which he had often spoken with delight, pierced him to the very soul with horror.

“Oh! dearest friend, Civitella is, notwithstanding all his licentiousness, a noble man, and, if he commits a fault, he knows how to compensate for it, in such a manner, that one must attribute it to him as a great action. From his discourse, and from his answers to my questions, I could distinctly perceive, that it was not him, but the Cardinal his uncle, who caused the banditti to pursue us so industriously; but he generously took all upon himself, and endeavoured to prevent us from discovering the truth. It is much to be lamented, that so superior an understanding,

with such a good heart, and such an enchanting appearance, must perish upon a Venetian soil.*

"It is a singular thing, considering the bad education which the children of the nobility receive, from the most stupid and rudest sort of priests, called abbés, that he was so enlightened, or possessed of that sensibility, which gives to all his actions so much captivating interest. I have neglected to mention, that curiosity induced us to ask the Marquis to show us the place where he had been wounded. He opened his shirt, and, to our great surprise, we perceived that there was not any appearance of a wound, or the smallest mark of any violence."

Continuation of Count O——.

My friend exhausted himself so much by his relation, that all the powers of nature seemed suspended. My doubts were but too well founded; he appeared to sleep, but it was that of death—my tears are sacrificed to his memory! He was a man of fine ideas; but from the goodness of his heart, and an unsuspecting disposition, he became so much the easier a prey to his enemies, whose dislike to him arose from his attachment to his master. I was now left alone in a great city, possessed of no friend to whom I could communicate my thoughts, and was obliged to take particular care not to talk with any one but upon common topics, because I presumed, and with reason, that I was surrounded by spies, who would put a false construction upon my words, and make that a plea for poisoning me. The death of my friend had made me cautious. His earnest request, that I would quit the place, and the message that the Prince sent to me by Biondello, now preyed upon my mind with double force; my sorrow also contributed, in a great measure, to aid my determin-

* My friend here goes too far. Although the sciences at Venice are in a bad state, for want of encouragement, there, however, are open to an enquiring mind very considerable libraries, from which a man may gain a great deal of useful knowledge. But the case is, that they will not make use of them. And the young nobleman, who intends to fit himself for the service of the state, has to study history and politics; a few departments, which, if they are filled up, require talents and industry, and are equally useful and necessary for those whom their birth has destined for the government of the republic. Thus has my friend praised the talents of the Marquis; they seem, however, to me to be more of a glittering nature than founded upon learning. COUNT O——.

ation. I resolved to leave Venice. I locked myself up in my room for a few days, and then forsook a city in which I had lost two beloved friends. Before I went, I sent to the Prince a card of departure.

I had travelled about sixty Italian miles, when the idea that I might possibly save the Prince, obliged me to return. I was irresistibly compelled to act in this manner; for my mind, ever anxious for his safety, represented to me in black colours all that might befall him; and I looked upon it as criminal not to endeavour to rescue him. Fixed in this resolution, I entered upon the execution of my plan, without once considering the dangers and difficulties which surrounded such an undertaking. I took the precaution, however, for fear of being discovered, to dismiss my faithful servant, and the only one I had taken with me. I parted from him with deep regret; for he alone had sometimes, by his compassionate fidelity, afforded me consolation. I was now obliged to go without companionship: but it was absolutely necessary. He was an incomparable good servant; but he had one fault, which I could not break him of, although he had served me twenty years, and which was in opposition to every principle of my scheme,—he could not keep a secret. What he knew he published to the whole world; and, though he did not tell it in direct terms, his actions and behaviour betrayed it to every one he was acquainted with, if he thought well of them, and fancied they were possessed of the same goodness of heart as himself. It could not but happen that he was very often deceived, but this did not make him at all more prudent. To put unbounded confidence in every one was his maxim, from which he never departed; for he used to say, that he should feel it severely if he was suspected by any one; and for that reason he thought it would be the same to others: and that the whole world trusted him he was convinced. He believed every one that was at all reserved in his conduct to be free from guile. If one expressly told him to be silent upon any subject, he became anxious not to let any thing drop that could betray him, which never failed to lead him into an error. For he had always in his mind, and at his

tongue's end, what he should not discover, and very often repeated to himself my prohibition; and it frequently happened that he acted thus in society, and said to himself, loudly and significantly, "Caspar, don't forget that your master has told you so and so—" (and immediately mentioned the thing which he ought to have kept a secret,) "you must not chatter out what he has prohibited you to mention."

He no sooner heard that it was public than he maintained firmly that he had told it to nobody. This serious fault was, however, balanced by his other good qualities, which induced me to keep him. At first I thought of dismissing him my service, as I was not accustomed to put up with such conduct. I used to practise an artifice upon him, which succeeded extremely well, as he was obliged to keep every thing he heard a secret. I related to him, at the same time, something that was unconnected with the subject, and desired him particularly not to mention it: by that means I deceived him, and the subject I wished to be a secret was forgotten. I did not mention to him my determination respecting him; but wrote a letter, and sent him forward with it, under the pretext of bespeaking quarters for me. He was obliged to deliver this letter to a landlord at —, with whom I had frequently lodged, and who knew him to be an honest man. I requested him to inform my servant that I had thrown myself into a river. I enclosed a bank-note, and commanded him to make the inn his home; begging of him, at the same time, not to make any enquiries after me. To preserve appearances, and to give him an idea that it grieved me to part from him, I wrote an affectionate farewell-letter to him, and begged of him again to fulfil my last and particular request.

Poor Caspar's case was extremely hard; but I was under the necessity of treating him in that manner. Had I told him that I was obliged to part with him, on account of my intention to travel privately, he would have sought me every where, and would have enquired of every body, whether they had seen or heard any thing of me; my hiding-place, by that means, would have been discovered,

and my death the certain consequence. I was convinced that he would punctually fulfil my last request, and it would be very easy for me to find him again when I wanted him. I begged of him to be comforted; that he would not commit suicide I was convinced; for the respect which he had for the last request of a deceased friend was uncommonly great. I hope my readers will pardon this digression; Caspar was my faithful servant, and deserves more than this poor tribute for his gratitude.

After hesitating a considerable time, (suspicious, probably of my intention,) Caspar separated from me. With the greatest emotion I looked after him until he disappeared. I was now left alone. Quite undetermined which road I should take, I departed for ——. On the day of my arrival, I heard that, in the evening, there was to be a masquerade ball; and a thought struck me, which I immediately put in execution. I bought the habit of a Polish Jew, ornamented my chin with a large beard, coloured my eyebrows and face, and wandered thus towards Venice. The goods which I was possessed of, and my horse, I turned into money, and secreted it, with some jewels, in my belt. I did not doubt my ability to play my character faithfully; for I had been a long while in Poland, and had dealt with the Jews; inclination too, partly, as well as necessity, induced me to learn their language, in which I was so well skilled, that I have, even by the Jews themselves, been taken for one of their tribe. I travelled the greatest part of the way on foot, and about twenty miles from Venice entered an inn, where I met poor Caspar. He was sitting in a corner of the room, and seemed totally absorbed in thought. I was anxious to avoid being seen by him, and, for that reason, was about absenting myself from the room, when he came towards me, and asked me from whence I came? This made me bolder, and I told him the place where I had passed the night before. The word was scarcely out of my mouth, when he enquired if I had not seen his master? “No,” I answered quickly, and reflected afterwards, how unthinkingly it was done; because it gave him to understand that both of them were known to me. But it did not strike Caspar in the same

way, and this *no* induced him to sit near to me, and to relate, with the most heartfelt sorrow, the history of his master. I reminded him to fulfil the last request of his benefactor, and heard, to my astonishment, that he did not think me dead. I immediately invented a story which convinced him of the fact. He departed early the next day, and promised me that he would faithfully observe my request. He took an affectionate leave of me, without knowing who I was, which convinced me that I might live at Venice in security; for I hoped to render the Prince services of great consequence.

Before I arrived at Venice, I met with an accident, which had great influence on my conduct. I stopped towards night-fall at an inn, which stood by the road-side. I found there a Polish Jew, who was at the point of death. He no sooner beheld me, than he addressed himself to me, and in a few minutes we entered into conversation, in which the greatest confidence was displayed. By my compassion, and the little service which I rendered him, I at last gained his utmost confidence. His illness increased; there was no hopes of his recovery. When we were alone, he called me to his bedside, and I experienced what astonished me beyond description. "I shall depart," he said, "very soon to Paradise, there to repose in the laps of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob; but I have something of great importance, which I cannot carry with me. You have gained my confidence, and for that reason I shall deliver it to you."—I was obliged to swear that I would punctually perform all he required; at the same time, he assured me, that I should be very generously recompensed for it. He went on:—"The ——an confederates have sent me with a letter,"—(I was obliged to take it from the lining of his cap,) "instead of me, do you deliver it."

How great was my astonishment, when I heard the Armenian described from head to foot! He did not know who he was; but he told me the place where he was to be found, at certain hours, so that I could not possibly mistake him; he gave me, besides, a sign, which was unknown to any one else, and the answer of the Armenian would clearly prove him the person. He mentioned, with the greatest

care, every particular several times, that I might not err. Although I did not want this precaution, I seemed to be very attentive to what he said, that he might not suspect that I had any knowledge of the Armenian. I experienced by the ——an business a great support to my plan; for I was anxious that they should think me the real messenger, and not suppose that this man had merely sent me. I considered I should, on that account, be trusted with greater confidence. It was for the first time in my life that I wished for the death of a fellow-creature; but I certainly did in this instance; for I counted upon what I knew already, and believed for certain, that I should save the Prince as soon as I could light upon the Armenian; and this would all have been frustrated if the Jew had lived!

He died the following day. I performed, according to his request, the last service, and departed the next day. The letter I secreted in my cap. My heart beat with joy, and I offered up my thanks to heaven for its favour. I thought I should never reach the place of my destination. I arrived, at last, in Venice; my heart palpitated. I took lodgings in a remote part of the city, at a small inn. Before I arrived there, however, I was very much alarmed. As I stepped into a boat, I beheld Biondello in the same. I was fearful of being discovered, because I could not trust to my disguise, as there were so many sly fellows in the city; although I avoided being detected by Caspar (who knew me so well). But if a man studies to avoid being known, the more he acts his part, the sooner he is likely to betray himself. I was influenced by this consideration, and therefore put a good countenance upon the matter. Biondello patted my shoulder, and gave me to understand, that my presence was very dear to him. I might have given him some suspicion, if he had not disembarrassed me, by enquiring something of ——. I answered him, that he must observe I had made secrecy my rule of conduct. Instead of being angry with me for such a reply, he was very satisfied with it. This peculiar conduct was very mysterious, but by degrees it cleared itself up. To my great satisfaction I learned from him, that they were informed of my death, and believed it; for he asked me if they had

found my corpse? I replied in the negative, alleging that it was impossible, on account of the ice that floated down the river—that I confirmed the report, every one will readily believe.

As soon as I arrived in the room which I had hired at the inn, I bolted the door, and opened the letter. The task was very difficult to perform; but I tried a variety of ways, and, at last, succeeded. To my great disappointment it was written in characters, and perfectly unintelligible. I made, however, several attempts to understand them, but in vain. I therefore copied them very exactly, in hopes, at some future time, to find the key to them. I closed the letter again, so that no traces of my having opened it could be perceived, and appeared the following day, at the appointed time, in St. Mark's Place. It was in the beginning of January: it was crowded with characteristic masks* and spectators, who were enjoying the entertainment. I did not mix with them; I was upon the watch for the Armenian. I pressed often through the crowd, and sought him in every corner, but he was not to be found. I resolved to wait until night, and then return again to the appointed place upon the *Broglia*, close to the church. The first person whom I saw was the Prince. He was in a domino, but his mask, which I knew, as well as his appearance, betrayed him. He stood before a pillar, upon which were a great many characters, and near him a mask dressed like a magician. The latter had a long white beard that descended to his belt, to which was attached a black rope, apparently as a symbol of his profession. In his right hand he held a stick, with which he pointed to the pillar, and seemed to explain something to the Prince, who listened very attentively. My curiosity prompted me to approach nearer, but it was useless, for they spoke so low that, in the tumult,

* I give this note for the information of those of my readers, who are unacquainted with the manners and customs of Venice. The characteristic masks are in Venice customary, from the time of the three kings, or wise men of the East, till the great feast day, which is the most lively in the whole year. All the streets and squares are, at that time, full of masks, and principally the St. Mark's Place. They represent all sorts of characters, nations, manners, and customs. Those who speak entertain themselves with every one who will talk with them; they personate faithfully their adopted character, and being sometimes men of wit, afford great entertainment. You frequently see amongst them the *Improvvisatori*, who are a kind of poets famous for impromptu.

no person could hear a single word. The magician, at last, turned round and discovered me. I thought that he played his character for mere pleasure, and was entertaining the Prince with his tricks ; but I was greatly mistaken. The more I reflected upon this event, the more I was convinced that it was designed for some particular purpose. The magician went leisurely away. I had made it always a rule to notice the smallest circumstance that concerned the Prince, and therefore followed him immediately: but he disappeared, and I saw the Armenian coming towards me. I gave him the sign and he answered it, bidding me, at the same time, follow him. I complied, and he conducted me into a dark street. He there unlocked the door of a house, and we went together into a small room. He took the letter from me, and, overlooking it slightly, seemed to be satisfied with its contents. He put several questions to me on account of the —— business, which I answered so that I did not give him the least cause to suspect me. He desired me to meet him again the next evening. He had parted from me, when he returned back, and addressed me in the Venetian language ; he had before spoken, to my great astonishment, in German. My genius assisted me ; I shook my head, and told him that I did not understand him. He smiled, and said he had forgotten himself. He was willing to remind me once more not to mistake the appointed hour the next evening. I promised him that I would not, and he went away. This circumstance made me still more cautious ; and I maintained my character so well, that, when I quitted it, it became very difficult for me not to use the tone and manners of a Polish Jew.

The time, until the hour arrived, passed very slowly ; at last, it was announced by a neighbouring clock, and I went immediately to the appointed place. I found the Armenian there, who hastily conducted me to a boat. Before we quitted it I was blindfolded, and when the bandage was taken from my eyes—guess my astonishment and terror !—for I found myself in the same hall where I had witnessed the frightful appearances I have before mentioned. It was exactly the same, but I thought the assembly were

more numerous. The hall was splendidly illuminated. The horror with which I recognised the fatal chamber was very visible ; for one of the assembly (by his speech, I guess it must have been the Armenian, for, as they all appeared masked, it was impossible to discover them,) told me to have courage. They said also, in the Venetian language, that a Jew was a singular animal, for he blushed at every thing but what related to traffic. The company took their seats at a long table, covered with black cloth. One of them seated himself at a little table, upon which there were pens, ink, and papers. He was probably the secretary of the society ; for he questioned me very minutely respecting the letter of —, and as to every circumstance that was at all connected with it, and wrote down all my answers to his questions. I could easily guess by this how much their success depended upon my answers ; for he read them over to me, advising me, at the same time, to alter what did not appear to me perfectly correct. I was too well prepared to drop any thing that might betray me ; I had likewise time enough, as I was questioned by an interpreter (I believe it was the Armenian himself), to think of the best answers. They were perfectly satisfied with me, and gave me a considerable present. The secretary paid it to me. I do not know how it happened, but his mask fell from his face. He endeavoured to put it on again as quickly as possible, but I already had seen that it was — Biondello ! The accident seemed to operate very forcibly upon the other members. " This circumstance," said they, " must now cost the poor Jew his life, to ensure our safety ; for in such cases as these we cannot depend upon honour."

" Accursed principle !" I thought, as the sweat poured down my forehead. I had sufficient resolution left to affect not to understand what was said ; for my attention was, to all appearance, directed to the money I had received. I heard their debates with apparent indifference, although they became so violent that they did not at all regard me. The question was, whether they should murder me or not. It was utterly impossible for them to understand each other, the tumult was so great. The Armenian, who had remained quiet for some time, now gave

a sign with his hand, and there ensued immediately a deadly silence.—This would have convinced me, had I not guessed it before, that he was the leader of this secret society. After a short pause, he began:—

“To provide for our safety, is our first and sacred duty. To maintain it, no sacrifice would be too great; but I cannot consent, on this occasion, to put a man to death whose services have been so essential to us.—I might say, and with justice, that it would militate against our plans, and destroy that which we have so carefully cherished.” He paused—but no one answered him. I became more composed. He proceeded. “And why should we kill him?—because he saw one” (pointing to Biondello) “unmasked!—Is he not in some measure a party concerned? and would it be possible for him, were this not the case, in the city of Venice, among so many thousand people, to find out one single person, whom he had but just glanced upon?—I moreover maintain, that the love of money, which is so natural to his nation, prevented his taking his eyes from the table. Our mere dress, without the mask, is sufficient to deceive any one who has not seen us in our ordinary habits.”

They all agreed with him. Biondello did not, perhaps, recollect that I had already seen and spoken to him in the boat; at least he would not mention it; or he might, perhaps, think I did not know him again. But to be certain of the fact, the Armenian asked me if I should be able to recognise the gentleman again whom I saw a few minutes ago unmasked? He put the question to me in such an insinuating manner, that many would have answered—“yes,” to give an idea of their powers for discrimination; but I knew too well how the business stood. I therefore made my answers accordingly. I affected not to know any thing of the matter; and, as I examined the money, I innocently asked, what they particularly wished me to do? “See,” said the Armenian, “I am not mistaken; he has not seen him!—He seemed to me too stupid to be a hypocrite, or to think of any thing but what leads to his interest.”

Several of the others made the same observation, and

seemed to regret that they had not chosen a cleverer fellow to transact their business. "Those who have sent him," answered the Armenian, "were prudent enough to see, that a task which did not require brilliant talents to execute, would have been faithfully and conscientiously performed by him; and indeed there is not so much treachery to be looked for in men that only know what they see, as in many others.—"Stupid people are always the most honest," added a fat gentleman (who probably could not boast of his abilities), and laughed at this impromptu so much, that the table, on which his belly rested, was very near falling down. I was dismissed, after they had enquired my place of abode, and commanded me to remain there for further instructions. They conducted me again blindfolded to the canal. My joy, when I found myself alone and safe, I need not describe; but the dreadful words, that they thought my death the only means of security, still resounded in my ears.

A whole month elapsed, in which I did not advance a step nearer to the completion of my purpose, notwithstanding my activity. My dress, and the promise which I had made to the Armenian (and by which I hoped to make some important discoveries), became now the greatest trouble to me; for it prevented me from instituting those enquiries which were necessary to aid my plans. It was impossible for me, as I was so surrounded by spies, to learn any thing that at all concerned the Prince without the greatest hazard. From what I had heard and seen in the secret society, I could only conjecture what they intended to do with the Prince; but it was impossible for me, an individual, to destroy the fabric which was built and guarded by so many.—I was continually reflecting upon these circumstances, which perplexed me very much. My sleep also was interrupted by the most frightful dreams, and was more fatiguing than refreshing. My imagination often pictured to me the Prince falling from a precipice. I caught him by his cloak, but it seemed to rend into a thousand pieces, and I saw him dashed upon the ground. I saw him struggling in a rapid stream; I ran to his assistance, and was drowned with him. I carried him from a

conflagration, and believed we were safe, when the flames suddenly surrounded us, and we were consumed. In short, the most horrible images, which my disturbed mind created, totally deprived me of my rest, and, I must confess, my weakness made an impression upon me the next day that was not easily to be eradicated; although I had very little faith in dreams.*

I was sitting one day (it was in the beginning of February, 17—) in my room, wrapt in reflection. The weather was very gloomy: flakes of snow, intermixed with rain, beat against my window, as the wind howled round the house. I did not quit my room the whole day. A gentle rap at the door at last roused me from my lethargy, and, before I could speak, I saw a man standing before me with a show-box upon his back. He asked me if I did not choose to see his raree-show? and without waiting for my answer, he set his apparatus before me. To get rid of him quickly, I gave him a piece of money, accompanied with a polite assurance that I had no desire to see his raree-show. I thought he would depart immediately, but I was very much mistaken. He first looked at me and then at the money. At last he said, "I never had so much given me before," and returned me the money. "You must have made a mistake!" I started. I found I had given him, in my hurry, a small gold piece—certainly too great a present for my situation. He observed my embarrassment. "Take the money back again," said he; "I will not profit by your error."

I did so; though I would readily have given it to him, through the fear of his being a spy. At that time the smallest circumstances were to me of consequence, and which I should not formerly have troubled myself about.—I gave him a smaller piece. He thanked me, but entreated me very much to look into his box. To get rid of him, I was obliged to comply with his request. He opened it, and I immediately started back—I beheld several scenes of the Prince's life (which could be known only to a very few

* I hope that no one of my readers will laugh at the Count O——'s weakness, which he himself so sincerely confesses. If I had observed this beforehand, I should have left out this little appendix, though I made it my duty to deliver every thing to the public as I have found it. — EDITOR.

persons), so accurately represented, that he who had a knowledge of them could not but recollect them. I looked significantly at the man; he disregarded me, and begged of me to see the other. — My astonishment now rose to the highest degree. I saw the figure of a Polish Jew, which exactly resembled me, with the following words under it: “The Count O—— as a Polish Jew.” — I lost all my patience. In an angry manner I pushed the box from me; — “Are the agents of hell to be found every where?” I exclaimed, and stamped upon the ground. “Not every where,” said the showman, as he grasped me by the hand. “Who are you?” I cried, starting with confusion. “Will you desert your friend?” I stood for a moment speechless. He drew a handkerchief from his pocket, and wiped his face. “Do you not know your friend Seymour?”

It was him. My joy bordered upon frenzy. At a time when I believed myself abandoned by all, when I could not even whisper my sentiments, for fear of being overheard and discovered, I found a friend, who had ever deserved my veneration and love. No one that has not been in the same situation can possibly have an idea of my sensations. Every misfortune operated upon me with double force, because I had no friend to whom I could communicate my sufferings. Now I was in possession of that valuable treasure, and pressed him with affection to my heart. After the first burst of transport was over, I begged of him to relate to me the cause which brought him hither, and what could have induced him to leave his native country? — That he never would really have followed the trade of a showman, was very clear to me. — “I wished,” he began, “as you will remember, to return to England. I travelled through Paris; and an accident obliged me to make a longer stay there than I at first intended. Several unforeseen events reduced my finances, and I was obliged, until new remittances arrived, to desist from pursuing my journey. In the mean time, I resorted to all the public places of diversion. I went one evening into a numerous society. The bottle circulated briskly, and the conversation became very agreeable. — At last a juggler came into the room, and begged to entertain us with his tricks. ‘If they

are worthy to be seen,' said a noble spark, 'the society will perhaps indulge you.'—'To prove that they are, I will show you a specimen,' continued he; 'and let your own judgment determine whether I shall proceed or not.'—He performed some that were not common, and which excited our admiration.

"The society unanimously desired him to go on; and every new trick he produced procured him fresh applause. That he was an Englishman I immediately perceived by his accent, which made me attentive to him. It seemed to me, that his features were not unknown to me; but I could not immediately recollect who he was. Under the pretext that I wished to learn some of his tricks, and to countenance a countryman, I asked him to call on me next morning, and to take his breakfast with me. He came, and in a little time I discovered that I had been intimately acquainted with him from a boy. His name was Johnson. My joy on this occasion was equal to yours when you discovered me. I had been educated with him. His father had been tutor at my father's. His talents, and cheerful heart, had acquired him the patronage of my father, and he suffered him to be my playfellow, and constant companion. All the privileges that I enjoyed were also bestowed upon him; he was instructed by the same masters, and dressed as I was. I could not show in my whole wardrobe a single thing which he did not also possess, and frequently, I observed, that he excelled me. Being the only child, the tender love of my mother (who was dead) had somewhat spoiled me; and I very often told the servants, haughtily, that I was the only heir to a large fortune. My prudent father employed this method, to show me distinctly that from merit alone our character must be estimated; and he gained his point by that means sooner than he would have done by moralising. I was at first angry with him, and hated Johnson; but this did not last long, for, on account of his polite and good conduct, he acquired the esteem of the whole family; and, by his sincere love for me, I soon was conscious of his good qualities. We became the best of friends, and endeavoured to excel each other in affection. He discovered a talent for mechanics. As I did not suffer

him to eclipse me in any thing, I also applied myself to the art ; but, by his superior industry and perseverance, he soon excelled me in that science : I also was not so much interested with it as himself. My father let us want for nothing. He hired masters who gave us the best instructions. Expensive instruments were also procured ; and Johnson soon finished a variety of curious things. From thence he went on farther. A genius like his was not satisfied with continuing in a beaten tract ; he had a desire always to see and study something new. Mathematics, which we had often read with our tutor, who was a very clever and expert man, had discovered to him several departments of knowledge, which he now wished to acquire. He made sun-dials, he manufactured optical glasses, besides electrical machines, and never failed to execute any thing that appeared worthy of his attention. To be brief, (for I see clearly that the recollection of my past days, and the qualities of my friend, have made me rather too loquacious,) he became soon so expert and ingenious, that he often, although a boy of fourteen years, was the object of admiration ; and, on that account, he was called the little Jack of all trades. He went on thus till he attained his twenty-second year, when, with great industry, he applied himself to chemistry ; in which he soon made many new and useful discoveries. About that time my father died, and he lost a friend who had never let him want for any thing, but gratified his wishes at any expense. He now determined to travel. All my persuasions to detain him were fruitless. He stood firm to his intention, and I could not even obtain a permission to travel with him. He even refused the considerable legacy which my father had left him. At that I became angry, for I willingly would have shared with him my whole fortune, which he knew perfectly well ; but I could not prevent him from executing his purpose. He would not even accept any money from me. ‘ Well then, you may go,’ said I, and embraced him with unfeigned sorrow.

“ It is impossible for me to discover what it was that induced him to desert the man who had acted towards him like a brother, and for whom he had the greatest regard. —

I was not able to guess it. A letter which, shortly after his departure, I received from him has discovered it to me. After a long apology for his conduct, he says, ‘that it was impossible for him to live any longer upon the bounty of his friends.’ He considered my father’s generosity as an act of charity—but it was a wrong idea. He, however, would endeavour to support himself. The death of my father caused him to reflect upon circumstances that never struck him before. He would not have a second benefactor, that he might not miss him; and wished not to expose himself to the danger of losing his support, when it had become impossible for him to exist without it. And if even he had not that to fear, he should be deficient in his duty, if he expected that from another which he was able to procure for himself.’—He added many other things; but this is sufficient to give you an idea of a man who will soon acquire your esteem; of one who rather chose to wander in the world, than to enjoy that rest and affluence which he could not procure by his genius. I will not detain you longer with his history, though it is very remarkable. You will be more pleased if you hear it from himself; and I am confident he will excite your admiration and respect.*

“The days which we spent together at Paris were exceedingly agreeable. We related our histories to each other, which indeed afforded a great fund of entertainment; for, since I received that letter, I had not either seen or heard from him. He said, that he had written several times to me; but, as I never obtained the letters, I could not answer them. I related to him the events which happened to me at Venice with the Prince —. After I had finished, he suddenly jumped from his seat, and ran up and down the room, as if influenced by some extraordinary idea. ‘We shall save him!’ he exclaimed. ‘What, the Prince?’ ‘Yes, the Prince!’ he replied firmly. ‘How will that be possible?’ ‘My dear friend! don’t reflect upon that at present; it wants but one desperate attempt. I see the possibility of the measure. Judging from what I have heard,

* He has, indeed, afterwards related to Count O—— his history, which also came to my hands with these papers. It is very remarkable; and, should I again have any leisure time, and my readers have a desire for it, I will publish it.

there is something serious at the bottom of these tricks. Let us destroy the plans of malice, which will perhaps be the ruin of many thousands, before they come to maturity.' ' Suppose they have in view something more than cheating him of his money, do you not believe that many are at work, and that resistance would be madness?' ' Undoubtedly, open resistance—but let us work against them where they do not suspect us, and in a way of which they cannot perceive the machinery, but only experience the effect of its operation. This, my friend, we certainly are able to undertake. I am too well acquainted with the deceitful tricks in this world which are published as wonders; and if I can do nothing more than merely chase away the mist from the eyes of the Prince, I may, perhaps, save him from being enveloped in their diabolical snares.'

" This proposition was so noble, that, although it may prove fruitless, I consented to it. When my remittances arrived, we made the best of our way to Italy. A trifling indisposition, which affected my friend, retarded our journey for a little time. Johnson requested I would dismiss my servants, and retain only one single footman, who was sufficiently faithful and prudent not to discover any of our plans. Johnson disguised himself and us so that we were quite unknown; a precaution which was very necessary.—He also observed, that in our mean dress we should be able to make more observations than otherwise; for he maintained, that they were less suspicious of the poor than the great. We took lodgings separately, at different inns, to have a more ample field for the execution of our plans; we even went so far as to have several lodging-houses, in which we alternately resided, having first changed our dresses, and concealed our country; for we all spoke different languages with equal promptitude. By that means, dear O——, I succeeded in discovering you, notwithstanding your disguise." " But how was that possible?" said I, interrupting him. " You betrayed yourself," he replied: " I lodged in the same inn that you did, and, by accident, was put into the room over yours. If I awoke in the night, I constantly heard some one speaking in your chamber. This made me attentive. I laid myself upon the floor of the room, and

overheard, through a crack, all that you said. I soon perceived that you were talking in your sleep. You must have been disturbed very much by frightful dreams, for your exclamations were generally—*Murder! Despair! Perish! Down! Down!*—Several times I heard you mention the name of the Prince; and this induced me to presume that you were the man whom I had such a great desire to see. I overheard you for several nights, and was at last confirmed in my opinion; for you spoke of things which no other person but yourself could possibly know. ‘Has he not similar views with us,’ said I; ‘knowing, as I do, that he was such a trusty friend of the Prince, and loved him so much? Is he not endeavouring to be useful to the Prince in that disguise; because he has rendered it impossible, by undeserved treatment, to appear in his true form.’”

“What!” exclaimed I, full of admiration—“You have been told, then, how the Prince has treated me?”—“More than that,” he answered. “You shall soon be convinced from Johnson’s letters, which I will communicate to you hereafter. However, I did not think proper to discover myself to you, as Lord Seymour, until I was fully convinced of the fact. I was suspicious, although it was improbable, that you were a spy in that disguise for the purpose of betraying me: I was, therefore, obliged to act with the greatest precaution. For that reason I appeared in the character of a showman. I had drawn, some time back, for my amusement, those scenes which I displayed to you, and it immediately struck me that they would be useful to me in this instance. Lest I should be deceived, which must have appeared in your conduct, I kept back your portrait until the last, which instantly gave me to understand that I was not wrong in my conjectures.

“It was some time,” continued Lord Seymour, “before Johnson and I were able to accomplish any of our plans, in spite of the greatest exertions. Every evening we met together, and communicated to each other our discoveries, and planned what measures we were to take in future. But, although we thought ourselves adepts at invention, we never could, by any stratagem, approach the Prince. ‘A good idea must be executed, though it may be founded on

a bad principle,' said Johnson, 'or all our undertakings will avail nothing, and our assistance probably arrive too late.' For that reason he wrote a note to the Prince, in which he invited him to appear alone, at the dead of the night, in a certain solitary place. He conveyed it, unperceived, into the Prince's pocket. He had written it so artfully, that the Prince, no doubt, presumed it came from the Armenian. The desire he had to be farther acquainted with this mysterious being, from whom he had heard nothing for some time, made us certain that he would not refuse this invitation. We were not deceived; he came. We hired two fellows to attack him, and came past as it were by accident. Johnson was to run to his assistance. For appearance-sake, he struggled with them, until they ran away at a noise made by myself and Matthias. Johnson conducted the Prince home, and we went, as quick as possible, to our lodging.*

"The success of this event you will find in Johnson's letters to me. They were sent, to avoid all intercourse with him, by a faithful waterman, to whom Johnson delivered them for me; and by that means he also obtained my answers."

And those letters I will communicate to the reader from Lord Seymour, from a French translation, which he made at my request, as I did not understand the English language. I have only omitted that which the public is already acquainted with from the preceding pages. Here the thread will be again united, which the death of my friend separated.

Johnson to Lord Seymour.

September 17, **

I am not able to recover myself from what I may justly call my extravagant happiness. Friend, rejoice with me—all has succeeded to my utmost wishes, and I look forward with pleasure to the time when the Prince will be freed from his enemies. My whole plan is fixed upon; and although every thing appears in confusion, I hope, how-

* I have omitted inserting this event before, which my friend the Baron F—, in his relation, has slightly mentioned, because I thought this the best place for it.

COUNT O—.

ever, that time will produce the desired effect. I pity the Prince from my heart. I soon discovered how he was situated. He has a good understanding, and an excellent heart; and shame to them who have so industriously laboured to spoil both. But why do I communicate to you things which you know already better than myself? You may judge of the degree in which my happiness made me quite absent. I shall be obliged to act with more caution in future. My plans were on the point of being destroyed; for Biondello came suddenly into my room as I was writing. It was fortunate that I heard him approaching: I had just time enough to secrete all my papers, and walk with indifference towards the window. He did not seem to take any notice of me, but took his hat and cloak and went out, probably upon some of the Prince's errands. But I will now tell you every thing that appears to me of consequence, that I may not again be interrupted; it would be impossible for me to connect my whole train of thoughts.

I conducted the Prince home, as you already know, under the pretext of protecting him. He permitted me to do it without hesitation; for he did not seem to have recovered from his fright, into which the circumstance of meeting two ruffians, instead of the Armenian, had thrown him. He did not speak until we entered his room. He then introduced me to one of his barons and Biondello, who were in the same room, as the saviour of his life. He thanked me heartily, and told me to ask of him any favour.—I considered for some time, and at last told him, that he would show me the highest mark of friendship if he would keep me in his service; for I had some time ago lost my master, and had endeavoured in vain to get a new one. I gave myself out for an Englishman of a good family; I told him that my eldest brother, during my minority, spent my fortune, and forced me to the necessity of seeking for subsistence in the humiliating capacity of a servant. By the last part of my story, I hoped to excite his pity towards me; for I am confident that we feel always more compassion for those who are reduced from affluence to poverty, than for such as from their birth are accustomed to servitude. If he sympathised with me, I could very soon

claim his confidence. In that point I succeeded to my satisfaction in a short time. But what I am rejoiced at most is, that he has made me his chamberlain ; in which situation I shall often have an opportunity of being alone with him. He would not, he said, degrade the saviour of his life by a livery ; and regretted only that it was not at present entirely in his power to make me independent of the world.

As chamberlain, I am to have a small room to myself ; but this is not yet quite ready. Biondello has permitted me, for that time, to make use of his. He is very friendly towards me ; and, although I acknowledge his civility for appearance-sake, yet I do not trust him ; for he has so much flattery and cunning about him, that I fear he has very little honesty left.

Several days after.—Thank God, I am in possession of my little room, and begin to write to you again, which was till now impossible for me to do, Biondello watched me so narrowly. I must not attribute that to the Prince, because he is never mistrustful. Yet I will not judge harshly. I have not yet conversed with the Prince ; but as my clothes are not come from the tailor's, I will ascribe it to that circumstance ; but if when I am equipped he shuns me, I must conclude that there is something more at the bottom of it.

One day later.—This morning, early, I obtained at last my dress ; and you are not able to imagine with what apparent rapture I put it on. Biondello was present, and gave me joy, on my exchanging my old clothes for such rich ones. But whilst I rejoiced to think how I had succeeded, he believed it arose from a childish love of finery, and this, I have no doubt, made him assure me that they fitted me extremely well. I let him enjoy his error, and to confirm his opinion, I took every part into my hands, and contemplated it with a foolish pride, smiled at myself in the glass, and neglected nothing that could convey to him the idea of my being a stupid clown. To make the joke complete, I told him that I intended now to take a walk, to show myself to the people, which I had not courage to do in my old coat. I intend, by that manœuvre, to send

you my first letter ; and I am sorry if you have been at all embarrassed on my account.

The same to the same.

October 1.

Biondello is the most cunning fox in the world ; but I have, in spite of his ingenuity, deceived him. By the confidence which he seems to put in me, he watches me so closely, that if I had not taken great care I should certainly have betrayed myself ; but I have at last made him believe that I am a perfect, unsuspecting blockhead ; and indeed it is the opinion that I wish him to have of me, in my present situation. He studied to find out in me more than I chose to let him know ; and the trouble he gave himself to accomplish this, is a sure proof that in him there is something more than the mere secretary of the Prince. The Prince has a very high opinion of him. He does not consider him as his servant, but his trusty friend. I pretended not to understand a word of the Venetian language (and Biondello thinks he is quite sure of it, for he has tried many experiments to prove the fact), and all those who do not speak English I converse with in French ; they are not at all suspicious of me, but often talk about things when I am present, which, if they knew I understood them, they would certainly conceal from me. As they look upon me to be of no consequence in opposition to their schemes, and the Prince likes me to be about his person, I now constantly attend him ; and he enjoys the advantage, as he supposes, of not being obliged to send me out of the room if he is conversing with any one, which he is always obliged to do with his other servants, as they understand the language.

Last night, as I was undressing him in his room, Biondello was present. After conversing upon some indifferent topics, they began about me. Biondello thought my qualities were stupidity, sincerity, and honesty. The Prince said that he was pleased with my person, and thought the qualities Biondello spoke of were better than good intellects united with a bad heart. " He is also courageous," said he ; " and to that I owe my life, at least my freedom."—

Biondello understood this hint. He altered his tone immediately ; for, at first, he was very satirical. He might have forgotten himself. He now talked a great deal about me, and said many handsome things of me to flatter the Prince. From that they turned to the subject of the attack made upon the Prince, and cracked their brains for a long time to discover the person who hired the bravos to murder him. That the note did not come from the Armenian, Biondello maintained ; for it was not likely that, if he meant to attempt the Prince's life, he would execute his plans with such temerity. The Prince agreed with him ; and the only doubt then remaining was, who could possibly have views upon his person, if it was not him, who had already given him to understand so. Biondello pointed out to him the possibility that his own court had done it, to lay hold of him. It immediately struck the Prince so forcibly, that he broke out into a most violent passion. It is true all circumstances united serve to strengthen this supposition ; for I learned, by the conversation, that the Prince had lately received a very rigorous letter from thence ; and Biondello reminded him of the conversation which passed at St. George. This circumstance apparently confirmed the fact in the Prince's mind. His expressions I will not repeat here. I do not know if I am wrong, but it seemed to me as if Biondello was pleased with the idea, that the Prince despised his court : for he knew the kind of language that would increase the Prince's anger, without letting him suspect his cunning. This man possesses dexterity sufficient to guide any person where he pleases, without his being able to perceive the thread with which he leads him. He sometimes appears quite different to that which you would suspect. Towards me he did not always act with such precaution ; for that reason I discovered more of his character than I otherwise could have done. He had strict orders from that hour to have his wits about him, and also to intercept the letters of Baron F—— (a cavalier of the Prince's household) to Count O——, to see if they would lead to any thing satisfactory. " For," added the Prince, " this F—— seemed some time back dissatisfied with my continuing here."

What this will lead to I am not able to see at present. I wish I could but give a hint to Baron F—— to be upon his guard ; for if Biondello conspires against him, he must fall a sacrifice to his plans.

Several days after.—Biondello every day puts more and more confidence in me, and it is, in all probability, because I communicate to him, with the greatest accuracy, all that I hear and see ; but you'll understand, I tell him only those things which he ought to know.—I seem to keep no secret from him. He often listens with the greatest patience to the ridiculous nonsense with which I endeavour to entertain him ; and he generally compliments me upon my talents and good conduct in trusting to him with such sincerity. Indeed, the method I have taken is the best way to ensure his countenance. But he is mistaken in my character, notwithstanding the accurate knowledge he possesses of mankind. In every conversation I distinguish more and more what an opinion he has of me ; indeed he begins to give me little commissions, but which at present do not consist of any thing farther than to have a watchful eye, in his absence, upon the Prince's conduct, and to communicate to him all that I have perceived and heard. And, to enable me to do this effectually, he takes care that every little new trait in my character is reported in a favourable manner to the Prince, who becomes every day more and more attached to me, and prefers me to all his other servants ; indeed he has of late appeared very suspicious of them, which is, in all probability, a contrivance of Biondello, in whom he puts the most unlimited confidence. That I should succeed so well, and in so short a time, I did not imagine ; it exceeds my most sanguine expectations. I will set it down as one of my great masterpieces of art, if I am able to outwit this Biondello.

A certain Marquis, by name Civitella, has just left the Prince. I have often seen him here. I question whether he seeks any thing beyond the honour of the Prince's friendship. They seem very intimately acquainted, and indeed I cannot blame the Prince for that ; for this Marquis has many good qualities, and seems to study to dis-

play them to advantage in the presence of the Prince. However, I have heard the Prince many times promise to pay him money; and, from what I could collect, it is not a small sum.—Then the Prince is in debt—it cannot be otherwise, from his present extravagance.—But how are his debts to be paid, when I know, for certain, that he receives nothing from his court? Is not this a diabolical plan of the Armenian, to detain him, and succeed in his designs upon him? I advise you, friend, to provide yourself with money, which may be had immediately upon your orders. I leave it entirely to your prudence, how you will accomplish this necessary object without betraying yourself.

I must tell you of a discovery which I have just made, and which I think of consequence:—The Prince generally goes out towards evening, and this happens very often; and, to-day I hear, he belongs to a certain society, called the Bucentauro. Could you not learn something about this sect; and whether we must also direct our attention to that? He was scarcely gone, when I hastened to my room to write to you. I had just finished the last line as Biondello came in. I must tell you that he does not suspect any thing when he finds me engaged in writing. I have told him that I have a great delight in making verses, and on that account I have always a poem lying at my side, which, as soon as I hear any person coming, I put in the place of the letter; and, to play my part well, I affect to translate it to him (for he does not understand English), and repeat the most stupid nonsense with a kind of poetic mania. This time he had not a desire to hear my poetry, but entreated me to defer reading it to a future opportunity, and go with him to his room; so that he might be present when the Prince arrived. This I did, and I was obliged to report to him all that had happened to the Prince during his absence. When we were in the height of our conversation, there came into the room an old man. He was bent low beneath his years; but there was an expression in his countenance which ill accorded with his age. His voice also was full and regular, and he had not that trembling pronunciation which generally affects aged people. Biondello told me that he was his

relation. I was going to absent myself, but he entreated me to stay ; as his cousin, he said, did not understand any other language than the Venetian, and as, besides, he had nothing of consequence to communicate to him. The old man looked at me with suspicion, but I busied myself with a book, and took no notice of him. "Do you know for certain that he does not understand us?" said he. "Are you sure that he is not an impostor?"

Biondello told him he need not be under any apprehension.—He described my character to him, and said, that in spite of my stupidity he could make me of service to him. "I will believe you," he exclaimed, "for I am acquainted with your talent in the knowledge of mankind, and which makes you worthy of your dangerous employment. The greater part of the fabric, which I have curiously raised, rests upon your shoulders. Do not loose, for heaven's sake, at the moment of its accomplishment, that firmness which will prevent our being buried in the ruins. I know your caution and foresight are very great. Think also on the reward you will gain, when we behold your giant work completed. I expect letters from —, and we are then at the summit of our wishes ; for the Prince will not make any resistance."

"The journey then, which you undertook, has been of great service?" "Is there any thing impossible? Had I not found great difficulty in persuading the court of —d— to agree in our plans, the mountains, which now appear before us, should long ago have disappeared. I did not mistrust you, believe me. Though it were so, I should forgive you ; for how could you be able to penetrate into my schemes?—You believed that many things were the effect of chance, which I contrived and put into execution.—Can you suppose that the Prince of —d— came to Venice for nothing?" "No one can possibly imagine what steps your prudence takes." "You must know then that he came hither at my request, to entice our Prince to a licentious manner of living, and to bring him, by that means, nearer to the point on which my plans are centred." "Pardon me, when you could so easily

have communicated with the court upon the conduct of the Prince, why was that journey necessary?"

"Is it not easier to remove a prince from the place where it is likely his penetrating eyes would have pried into our designs, than to make thousands privy to our plans? I had only to write to the Prince to come, for we had settled it some time ago. — I knew he was a member of the order of ——. I am one of them. I wrote to the superiors of the order, and they contrived to send messages to him, which made him believe he was invited to see the internal part of the sanctuary." "I am astonished! As often as I see you, you always appear to me in a new and extraordinary character." "Hear then farther. The second step was not difficult for me to take. The Count P—— is first minister at the court of —d—. For appearance sake, the feeble King wears the crown, but P—— governs: he is the machine by which every thing is regulated. This P—— has long been my friend. I was acquainted with him whilst he was ambassador at Rome, and I proposed him for a member of the order of ——. At that time the sketch of the plan, which we are now about to execute, was shown to him, and which was always the same, although accident has changed the persons by whom it was to have been accomplished. I wrote to him that every thing was ready, and we waited for him only to complete it. Nothing was easier for him than to persuade his avaricious monarch to let out his troops to conquer —, to which his council had long before directed their attention. P—— met me at —i— to bring me the happy account of his success; and the King suspected that he was gone to conclude a promised alliance."

"Do I dream? Is it possible to play thus with kings?" replied Biondello. "I did not expect such a question from you," said the old man. "Do you not know, that one may deceive kings much easier than other people; because flattery succeeds to a miracle with them; spreading, as it were, a mist before their eyes? And if they are prudent enough to disregard that illusion, we must then give them amusements to which they are attached, and never deprive them of any thing, but what relates to state affairs, for fear

of incurring their displeasure.”* “And does not the King of —d— know for what purpose he lends his powers?” “Is the architect obliged to explain his whole design to a mason, who is employed to place stones and execute the work, which probably he would not even then understand? He works for his daily bread, and if he obtains that, he is satisfied. Can the King of —d— desire more than the acquisition of —, which must be of great value to him, as it is immediately connected with his own territories? It is the object which he sets his heart upon. However, to satisfy your curiosity would take up that time in which I hope to hear more important accounts of the Prince.”

Biondello replied: “Every thing is in the same state as when you left us; and I have only here and there added a little where it seemed necessary.” Here Biondello related to him the event of that evening in which the Prince was attacked, and concluded with saying, that he had made use of that circumstance to enrage the Prince more against his court; for he made him believe, it was certain that the court intended to imprison him. The old man seemed satisfied with that, and immediately replied, “How is he as to his manner of thinking?” “He approaches more and more to a freethinker,” replied Biondello; “and I am confident but little is wanting to render him such entirely.” “Then,” said the old man, “my machines act as successfully as I can wish.” “How! was this also your work? Will a freethinker believe in apparitions? Will he bend his neck to the yoke of a religion which puts restraint on him, and which it is your opinion he will accept?”

“I see you are very little acquainted with the human heart. To shake a belief, which fundamentally rests upon conviction, is very difficult; but to guide the opinion of a sceptic is sufficiently easy. This may seem a paradox, but I will prove it to you:—Man—let him wear a crown, or

* I have written every thing down as I found it, and I do not know how far this may be true. But, if I may speak my opinion, it does not appear to me quite certain; for I have seen in my life but one king, and he seemed to me so full of wisdom and majesty, (probably the old King of P—, Fr. II.) that I would have sworn that his very looks would have awed those that dared to insult him.

the rags of a beggar—wants always a support in trying circumstances; and if he despairs at all, he sighs after comfort with double anxiety. And what offers to him the wished for consolation but religion? Hence, it is evident, that the religions of those nations who are still, as it may be said, in a state of ignorance, have infinitely more ceremonies than those that are enlightened. The Prince rejected this support, and launched boldly into the gulf of sophistry. The more he meditates upon it, the more it will perplex him. As he sinks beneath enquiry, he will greedily devour any new idea that tends to dissipate the former. And is not the Catholic religion, in which there are so many saints that he cannot doubt his preservation, exactly calculated for the purpose?”

“How! Do I hear right? Did you not extol the principles of doubt, and yet you called scepticism a tottering fabric? Have you also been converted, and have you found a greater consolation in contemplating the scapulary, than in your former rational way of thinking?” “Why do you let appearances so often deceive you? Is not the tool that is used by the mechanic for the most curious purposes, when placed in the hand of a child, a dangerous instrument, with which it innocently wounds itself? Does not solid food affect the feeble stomach, whilst it operates not upon a strong one? And will not a child throw from it the instrument with which it has wounded itself, whilst the artist would not sell it for any price? Will not the person of a weak stomach avoid food that is disagreeable to it, whilst the hungry healthy man enjoys it? But I will argue otherwise. What is belief, and what is disbelief? Does not the Mahometan think that his belief is founded upon principle and authority, and call the Christian an unbeliever; whilst the latter thinks the same of him? Hence, then, we may conclude, that belief depends merely upon conviction, the want of which is disbelief. — This is self-evident.”

“You think, then, a fundamental belief is that of which we feel convinced, and also that men may entertain different opinions upon the same subject, and yet be called believers.” “They both undoubtedly think that they are so.” “Is

not that an argument against you? If the Prince thinks that his belief is fundamental—"Then it would be difficult to wean him from it; but he does not think so." "And yet he adheres to it with firmness, and defends his opinion with the greatest warmth." "Let me ask you one question:—Does conviction always carry with it tranquillity of mind?" "I thought that they were inseparable."

"And do you find it with the Prince? Have you not often told me, that, when free from dissipation, he was dissatisfied with himself? He is the child who is pleased with the brightness of a knife, which he throws away as soon as he is hurt by it; he is the invalid whose stomach cannot digest heavy food; who guards against it as soon as he perceives the evil; and then, in order to rid himself as soon as possible of his former disorder, adopts a lighter diet as necessary. The Prince thinks that many of those things are beneath his notice which men seize upon with so much eagerness, and from which continual reflection and an unbiassed mind alone can deliver us. And I declare to you, that in a short time he will believe in spirits and apparitions. I do not know him—I do not know the human heart, if his former bigoted ideas of religion do not return with double force. Must not this consequence obtrude itself upon him as soon as his experience teaches him that apparitions do exist; that his present philosophy could not once make him disbelieve this, which is the most trifling and unimportant point that a man can doubt of. Would it not much less be able to eradicate that idea from his mind which education, custom, and our own partiality, have concurred to proclaim by an internal voice? Will he not pass from professed freethinking to the contrary extreme, and thank the man who leads him to it?"

Biondello was silent, and appeared perfectly convinced. The old man rose slowly from his arm-chair; Biondello then told him something which I was not able to understand distinctly; but I learned that he was to prepare the machines; for, the day after to-morrow, there was to be a grand feast.

Well, friend, what do you think of this conversation? The least that we can infer from it is, that Biondello

is concerned in the plot against the Prince. Who can possibly be that old man?—Is it not merely the gasconade which is always peculiar to those sort of people? because they by that method keep their underlings (of whom, in all probability, Biondello is one) in an astonishing dread of their power. So that I know not what to think of his making use of the —d— for the execution of his plan. And for what purpose was this employed? How can it have any reference to the Prince? How does this all agree with ——?—Ha! I have a thought—What if they intend to create the Prince King of ——?—Perhaps this may be the intention of the court of —d—. —I must confess sincerely, that, at present, all is a perfect mystery to me.

The same to the same.

October the 4th.

The Prince is invited to-morrow to a feast, which is given in St. Benedetto, and, as I understand, merely on his account. His whole household (except one) will be present! and who this one should be is a matter of great dispute. The lot will probably fall to Biondello, because he has pretended for some time to be indisposed. I call it a pretence, because, in my presence, he does not appear so, at least less than when the Prince is present. He will, perhaps, as soon as we are gone, employ his time in the preparation of the machines of which the old man spoke. His pretended indisposition prevents suspicion, and makes it more probable. And may it not be possible that this banquet is the idea of the old man? I shall have a watchful eye upon him, and, if possible, will remain at home.

October the 5th.

I know not what to make of the Prince to-day. He rose very early, looks pale and haggard, but studiously seeks to hide it; and is dissatisfied if we appear to observe it. It is the same with Baron F—— and Biondello. They are all silent, but the Prince laughs at them; yet I can observe that his mind is not easy.—Perhaps he has seen an appa-

rition. It is probable, although I cannot discover the truth.*

The whole house are gone to St. Benedetto, and I am the only inhabitant in this large building. A freezing horror surrounds me. My character, as I informed you, was mistaken by Biondello; and he begged of the Prince to accompany him. I am glad he is not here; for his carelessness has thrown into my hands his pocket-book filled with letters. He left it in his great-coat pocket. It contains, to all appearance, nothing of consequence; but I will not omit to secure any thing that, perhaps, at a future period, may be of great importance. I thought I should discover something more when I found it, but I was deceived; for there were only some little songs, poems, and love-letters. I was about to return it to its place, when I resolved to ransack it once more, and, behold, I discovered a secret pocket; in which there was what appeared to me to be the key to some private writing, that may one day or other fall into our hands; you will take particular care of it.

Several of the Prince's household are returned, and in great consternation. It is said the Prince has killed the Marquis Civitella, and is fled. The reason for this rash act I know not. God only knows how this unfortunate affair will end!

Count O—— in continuation.

As soon as I had read this, the letter which the Jew gave me for the Armenian came into my mind. I sought it, and found that the figure was indeed the key to the hieroglyphics. I hastened immediately to Lord Seymour, to inform him of this acquisition. We sat ourselves down, and, with that key, very easily unravelled the whole; part of which is as follows:—

“All that you desired is prepared to the greatest nicety, and ——inski is chief of the party; a man of great firmness and valour, who is beloved by all. He is satisfied with your promises, and wishes, as we all do, very

* The reader knows it already by the relation of Baron F——, and for that reason I omit the rest here. *Annot. of the Count O——.*

much that the — Prince may become our King. As soon as he has embraced the Roman Catholic religion, and has obtained the — crown, we shall immediately look upon him as our regent; and one single word will then be sufficient to make him our sovereign, and us —”

Our surprise at the contents was beyond conception — the execution of the scheme depending merely upon one word too. And what will be the consequence if the Prince should be King of —? The old man said himself, that these were the only means to accomplish the plan — and what could that plan be? — No other than that which would shake monarchies to their foundation, or totally subvert them. And if the Prince should obtain the crown of —, what would happen — Is there not besides him a successor? Now I perfectly understand the signification of these words, “Wish yourself success, Prince; he is dead.” I now perfectly recollect with what emphasis the Prince repeated those words. (As F—— has written to me) I was seized with horror.

“Friend,” said I to Lord Seymour, “let us not proceed in this business — what are we against so many? how shall we be able to swim against the stream?” “We will do it as long as our powers last,” he answered me, resolutely. “Suppose they are detected, and we are involved in the danger?” “Then we shall have the satisfaction of knowing that we have done all that we possibly could do, which will sweeten our hours, whether breathed out in a prison or a palace.” “But is it possible that he can have that consolation who throws himself through caprice into danger?” “We are not in that situation. — When the lives of thousands, or at least their happiness, is at stake, no danger is too great to brave, if there is any probability of succeeding.” “And is this the case?” “It is.”

“How, friend, can you effectually subvert power? Can you hinder a band of rebels from leading away the thoughts of the Prince, when they are attracted by force? Has he not already done what they at — desired him to do? Will not every action now become easy to him, when he considers that he can receive forgiveness of his

sins after every wicked deed?" "Friend, you do not consider that if our plans fail, there is still one left? Have you no idea of the power of the state inquisition here? If we discover only half of what we have heard to be true, every thing is lost. Will they not fear, and with justice, that in that secret society are also manufactured plans against the republic; and that they wish the Prince to assist them in the execution of their schemes? You must consider also, that we cannot be detected if we inform through the *Bocche Parlanti*."* "But what will become of the Prince? Gracious Heaven! — If we should be the means of forcing the sword of justice to be drawn against him."

"The Prince is excusable — whatever he has done, his rank will be taken into consideration. Punishment is not inflicted with that severity upon men of high birth; as it is upon the meaner class of mankind. But let the worst come; — is it not better that *one* man, even though a Prince, should die for the people, than that multitudes should perish on his account? — And though the mine in its explosion should even shatter us with the rest, from our ashes there will spring flowers which must make future generations revere our memory."

Every one of my objections made the Englishman more firm; and I was at last convinced that he was right, although I suffered much in the encounter. I suppressed my tears with the hope of a better issue to our plan than that which we supposed; and sought, as much as I could, to persuade myself of its being practicable, though I acknowledged the feeble foundation upon which it rested. I trusted principally to Johnson's prudence, which was evinced in a great degree by his letters. — With the greatest anxiety I hastened to my lodgings, and read the following letters written by him. Two of them I have omitted entirely, as they did not contain any thing but

* These *Bocche Parlanti* are large lions' jaws, of marble; there are many of them to be seen in the Palace of St. Mark. All secret denunciations are put in them, and over every one is written the kind of accusation which you are to deliver. The State Inquisitors examine them every evening, and take into consideration the letters they find in them. By that means it is easy to remain unknown; for he who expects a recompense for his information detains a piece of it to show it.

what has already been related. And if I found in the others what I wished for, the reader will easily discover it.

Johnson to Lord Seymour.

October the 25th.

Since the events which have of late happened to the Prince, he is quite changed. He flies the societies which he formerly sought. — He locks himself up in his room, and appears gloomy and melancholy. I do not wonder at this ; but it has taken too strong a hold of him, for I am fearful that he should lay violent hands on himself. — Would you suppose that, under the pretence of being ill, he has sent away the Marquis, who shows so much tender care for him, and is devoted to the completion of his happiness, and who was a little while ago his most intimate friend ; and will you believe me when I tell you, that Biondello is not now so frequently about his person, and that his love for solitude is equal to his master's. Necessary as this might be under other circumstances, it now makes me more anxious for him. He has so entirely separated himself from the world, that he seems cold even to his bosom friends : a state of mind by which suicide must be encouraged, and less resolution be required to commit it. That this is already the case with him, I experienced last night. I was alone with him in his room. This happens now very often ; for, as soon as it grows dark, he does not like to be alone ; he therefore obliges me to be with him, as he believes he can vent his sorrows in my presence, without my being able to understand him, and that I cannot, from stupidity, learn any thing from his gestures. This dread of being alone in the evening, which he was before not accustomed to, gives me (besides the advantage of observing him) hopes that he may, perhaps, even yet, adopt other sentiments ; for, in my opinion, solitude by candle-light must rather strengthen than alter such a resolution. And I think, that as long as one yet fears something, or, which is the same thing, thinks one has something to lose, let it be ever so trifling, which one would not willingly be deprived of, the ties are not entirely severed which unite us to this mortal life.

Now to the business. I was alone with him one evening, when he rested his head upon his hand, and sat for some time almost without animation. He sighed deeply, and lamented that he had ever been born. At last he rose, and opening his writing desk, took out of it a red riband. He pressed it to his heart and lips. Oh! that I were able to describe his look. It pierced me to the heart—I will give you, to the best of my recollection, his soliloquy.

“Oh! thou only remains of my beloved Theresa!” (the name of the Greek lady.) He pressed the riband to his lips, as the tears burst from his eyes. The stress which he laid upon these words, and his deep sorrow, almost deprived me of my senses. I never saw a man in such a terrible situation. His eyes were wildly expressive, and his voice hollow and monotonous. I believed his feelings had almost driven him to insanity. The burden seemed too heavy for his soul to bear. He remained for some time fixed like a statue:—at last he spoke. “My Theresa! my all! my ——. Ah! how can this miserable earth afford any relief to my sufferings!—this pitiable state which cannot produce one single being who is perfectly happy. Which could murder a Theresa!—an angel!—murder!—murder!—murder!” (This he spoke with dreadful agitation.) “Ha! what prevents me from breaking the bands which separate me from her? Who can blame the lion that bursts the chains which deprive him of his liberty, and which separates him from his young? But can I find her again? Irrecoverably lost! Irrecoverably! I would seek her through the world, but she is irrecoverably lost! What would I now give for the sweet ideas of eternity, which console so many under their afflictions! What would I not sacrifice, if I knew for a certainty that man had still a farther destination after his death? I would endure the painful torments of hell, could I hope by that to recover my Theresa. Why was a form so beautiful created to be the food of worms, that prey indiscriminately upon the works of nature? Oh! thou that dwellest beyond the stars, if thou existest, restore her to me again, and I will believe in thee!!—Ha! what is that? What thoughts prey upon my mind?—Shall I then never more

forget her? Will she be always united to every idea?—Wilt thou—eternal Being!—give me a hint of thy existence? Oh! what a sea of doubts and uncertainty! Who can save me from it? I shake like a reed, which the wind will break. But I will not wait for it—I will prevent it. I will attain the truth—I will draw back the curtain which hides her from my sight!”

He walked up and down in the room in violent agitation. He did not seem to regard me at all. His eyes glanced upon the riband, which he held fast in his hand. He started with surprise. It was green! “What is this?” he exclaimed. “Will you tear from me this also, ye invisible powers? I am, perhaps, still to be happy?—Ah!—Ah!—Happy!—(after a pause.) But I have it still. It is, perhaps, the dear shade of my Theresa that is near me, and will administer comfort to my heart. Hope! Oh! without thee there is no comfort left!”

You see, dear Seymour, that he believed the change of the colour was a miracle. If I had dared, it would not have been a difficult task for me to unravel the mystery; for, when I consider that Biondello has a false key to the bureau, the change is easily explained; and should we not suspect such a man of every thing? It was very late, and the Prince did not seem disposed to retire to rest. His mind still dwelt upon his beloved. His soliloquy was a strange mixture of belief and doubt, and both were apparent equally. “Yes, it will, it must be so; with the thread of life will also be destroyed my piercing torments!” He had scarcely finished the last word, when Biondello rushed into the room, and threw himself at the Prince’s feet. Alarm and terror were expressive in his countenance, his eyes seemed starting from his head, his hair was dishevelled, and he was half dressed. “Alas! my gracious Prince,” he at last cried, with a tremulous voice, and pressed himself closer to him. The Prince was quite embarrassed, and said not a word. “Pardon, pardon, gracious Prince!” exclaimed Biondello again.

“Are you mad, Biondello?” said the Prince. “Why do you ask my pardon? What have you committed?” “It would be well if I *were* mad. Alas! my gracious, my

beloved master!" The Prince had great difficulty to bring him to his senses. At last he succeeded, and then related his reason for this strange conduct; after having entreated once more his pardon for what he should relate. The Prince granted it, and he at last began.

"Since your Highness has devoted your hours to solitude, I have led a most miserable life. It is the more painful to me, when I consider that I have lost your affection. It seemed I was no longer worthy of it, nor of the happiness to be with you, gracious Prince! I did not perceive in you any traits of your former humiliation; but, in its place, I beheld your countenance shadowed by melancholy. I questioned myself from what this could proceed. I doubted whether from the effect of the apparitions, or the great losses you had sustained. But you did not reflect upon them at the moment;—it was from mature deliberation, and when there was nothing to be feared. Sudden and violent sorrow is seldom of long duration; but that which comes after it is so much the more dangerous, as it takes deeper root, and deprives us of that consolation which we in general treasure up for ourselves. Anxiety for you, gracious Prince, oppressed my soul, disturbed me during the day, and chased away slumber from my eyes.—I had scarcely laid myself down, and offered up a prayer to my Saviour, and all the saints, that they might take you under their protection, when on a sudden I thought I saw a light. I opened my eyes, but I was obliged to shut them immediately. A figure stood before me in the midst of splendour, which blinded me. I could not on that account open them again. With an agreeable, yet thrilling voice, it spoke as follows:—‘Thy master is big with thought, which is supported by his disbelief. He means to fly by suicide into futurity, for which he is not yet prepared. I dared not to appear to him myself. Tell him this, and warn him of the consequences of so rash an act.’"

The Prince turned pale, seized Biondello by the collar—"Impostor," he exclaimed, with a fearful voice, "you have overheard me!"—Senseless he fell upon the ground. I hastened to his assistance; but the Prince prevented me, and dragged him to an arm-chair. His look was ghastly.

It was a long time before he could recover himself, in spite of our endeavours. But as soon as he opened his eyes, he threw himself again at the feet of the Prince, and begged pardon that he was obliged to say what he did. The Prince repented his intemperance. "It is the effect of imagination, Biondello," said he to him; "go to bed. To-morrow I will send a physician to you. I forgive your conduct, because it shows your love for me. Be composed on my account, and go to bed."

"I have not dreamed, gracious sir, and my fancy has not at all deceived me. Behold here is the proof of it."—He put something into the hand of the Prince, who looked at it with astonishment. "Yes, it is," he exclaimed; "it is the ring of my Theresa, which I gave her on her birthday.—Oh what a day of happiness was that to me! But how came it into thy hands? How is that possible? She took it with her into her grave; I saw it myself!" "The spirit gave it to me.—'Here,' said he, after having uttered those dreadful words, 'carry this to your master, and tell him that patience and resignation will be his best guide.' He disappeared, and I hastened hither."—"Hope and patience conduct us to the end which we desire! What is this! If she—It cannot be her—"

At this moment there was a great knocking at our gate; it was opened, and the Marquis Civitella came in. His dress, as also his countenance, indicated the greatest embarrassment: from his eyes flashed anxiety and fear. He hastened immediately into the Prince's room; and when he saw him he seemed to be more tranquil.—Can you guess, friend, for what purpose he came hither at such an unusual time?—He had seen the same apparition as Biondello had; every word was the same, only that he did not obtain the ring, which the Prince had forced, with great difficulty, upon his finger. It is therefore but too true, that he also belongs to the party, and that all this is an invention. I cannot doubt it for a moment. If I were not already a little prepared for their plans, they would have deceived me, so masterly did they act their parts. And I must give myself credit, that I looked upon all this for deceit, and not for fact, so great was their deception.

Judge yourself, by that, if it was possible for the Prince to doubt a moment on the subject ; and the ring—from whence they obtained that I should like to know. As far as I can learn, the Greek lady is buried in the vault of a church of the convent ——, where no person can obtain an easy access. We must presume then, that there are some monks of the order engaged in the execution of the plan ; and even if they knew not any thing of this circumstance, they may have been corrupted by money ; which, from the character of the priests, I naturally conclude must have been a considerable sum. Do not laugh at my observation, if it should seem singular to you. I thought it necessary to refute what you said in your last letter ;—that the desire of acquiring wealth might probably be the aim of the conspirators. That is certainly not the case ; for what sums of money might they not already have spent, which the Prince, in his present situation, never could repay them ? And if that was their aim, could they not have obtained it quicker and surer ? How you came at present to have such an idea, I cannot comprehend. Do not deceive yourself with the delusive dream of hope : and, for heaven's sake, do not believe that your bank-notes will be sufficient to subvert the plans which are laid for the Prince. Let us make use of them for our own support, whilst we are endeavouring to destroy their views. And that cannot happen until I experience more of the business ; for we are not able, at present, to prevent the attacks upon the Prince's religious opinions, unless his good genius should assist us ; but we cannot expect that at present. I am not perfectly clear as to the extent of their design. I believed that they wished to make the Prince a mere proselyte ; for we already have a number of instances of the kind, and of the tricks made use of by the church, to tear what they call a stray sheep from the claws of the devil. But this seems to me very improbable, for they would have found this an easier task than that which they are pursuing. And what could induce the old man to have said, that he had already sought to bring the court of —d— over to his plans, if he did not mean to prove himself a pitiful boaster, which could not have been his

intention. But, because I cannot find out their aim, it does not prove that it must necessarily be the desire of acquiring authority. If I was willing to entertain you with more probabilities, I could fill my letter with them. But what am I about? I see that my letter has increased very much, and yet I have not related to you all that my heart wishes, and what it is necessary for you to know. You see how clearly I was determined to support my opinion. Have you entirely forgotten that I like to quarrel with you, and that you used to call me, in a joke, the quarrelsome friend? This harangue is sufficient to recall that to your memory.

Civitella stayed with us the remainder of the night. They had no idea of retiring to rest; I was therefore obliged to call up the cook, to prepare a meal as quickly as possible.* They sat themselves down to the table, but had no appetite. In vain did Civitella endeavour to be witty; in which he, in general, succeeds very well. The conversation turned upon apparitions; and Civitella now found an opportunity to reproach the Prince for his former coolness towards him. He excused himself, by pleading the state of his mind. Civitella seemed satisfied, but begged of the Prince to follow the methods which he would propose, to eradicate his disorder. His plans were all of such a nature, that he could not help smiling; and by that means he succeeded, at last, to make the company somewhat merry; to which the Prince, however, contributed very little, but gave no signs of dissatisfaction. He at last promised to follow the advice of the Marquis, who could not conceal his joy on the occasion.

"Then, we have you again, my Prince," he exclaimed in exultation. "Do not triumph too soon, Marquis," said the Prince; "will you always be able to find the right means to chase away my gloomy thoughts?" "Always, if you follow my advice, gracious Prince!" "You flatter yourself too much. — When you have proved it to my satisfac-

* At Venice this is not at all extraordinary; for the desire of eating is (probably on account of the sea air) very great. We seldom see Venetians without having something to eat in their hands. In the city, on every side, you see victuals of all kinds to be sold. Even at the Opera-houses you are frequently interrupted by the noise of sellers of provisions; and in every house at midnight you find victuals preparing.

tion, I will believe you ; but I fear that you will not succeed so easily as you expect." " Do you know that confidence is half the remedy ? — Above every thing else, likewise, comply with my first request, and rather make yourself acquainted with the corporeal than the spiritual world ; for, although I know, by experience, your influence in the latter, I nevertheless cannot help fearing, that the gloom, which is the inseparable attendant upon creatures devoid of flesh and bones, might have a greater effect upon your mind. — But did the apparition, which I beheld this night, appear in consequence of your command, or have I incurred your displeasure by any other means ? "

Civitella betrayed great anxiety as he spoke these last words, and the Prince sneered — probably from the association of ideas. The Prince soon resumed his former countenance. I was obliged now to serve tea, and could not hear the end of the conversation ; yet I concluded, from several words which I caught by accident, and from the Prince's countenance, that it had taken a happy turn, and that the entertainment must have ended very well. The midnight hour is past, and although I would willingly chatter with you a little longer, I must finish my letter — I wish for repose.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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S T A N D A R D

NOVELS.

N° X.

THE GHOST-SEER.

VOL. II.

EDGAR HUNTLY.

COMPLETE.

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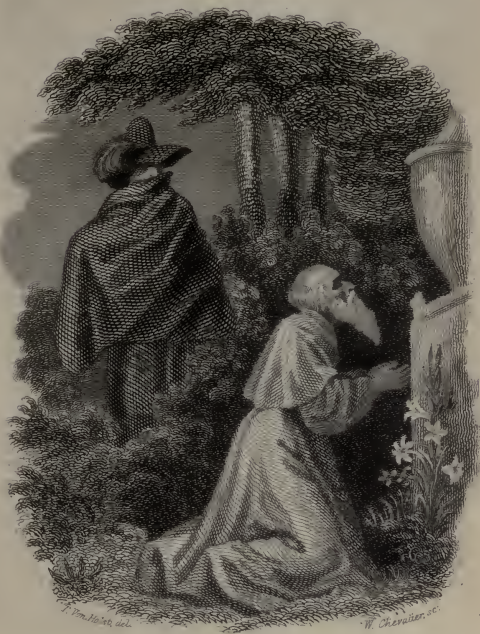
THE GHOST-SEER!

He stretched his hand towards a new coffin. Suddenly the lid made a rattling noise, and fell to the ground. The Greek lady instantly appeared."

THE GHOST-SEER!

BY

SCHILLER.



*I was stepping nearer, when I observed
a grey bearded old man, kneeling be-
fore the monument, and praying fervently."*

LONDON:

COLBURN AND BENTLEY.

CUMMING, DUBLIN,—BELL & BRADFUTE, EDINBURGH.

GALIGNANI, PARIS.

THE
GHOST-SEER.

Narrative of the Count O—— continued.

I PROCEED in the elucidation of my extraordinary history, by laying before my readers a continuation of the Englishman's letters :—

Johnson to Lord Seymour.

November 2d.

CIVITELLA's proposals to amuse the Prince, and to occupy his attention, have succeeded. His hotel is crowded every day with guests, who are treated in a most excellent manner. He gives concerts and other entertainments, and is scarcely able to call an hour his own. The extravagant expense which this causes, you may easily conjecture. I would that gaming had not been introduced. He has lost, in a short time, very considerable sums. From whom he obtains the money I cannot learn; for he wins nothing. That he may borrow great sums of the Marquis, I can believe; for, since he has persuaded him that he could command the world of Ghosts, he will do any thing for him. He seems to care for nothing, and is again a good companion. Concerning the last the Marquis triumphs not a little, because it supports his proposal; but the good man does not observe the worm which gnaws the heart of the Prince, whilst his countenance is dressed in smiles. I often see how he struggles with himself. The only thing which pleases me is, that he talks with respect upon religious matters, which he formerly treated with contempt. From this we may hope that he will not destroy himself.

November 4th.

What do you think? — The Prince has been to church! — This circumstance, which his people will not forget, and which I certainly did not dream of, is attributable to Civitella. He was yesterday with the Prince, and spoke of a certain Bishop — who would preach to-morrow in the church of St. Marco. The praise which he bestowed upon the heart and genius of this man, excited the attention of the Prince so much the more, because the Marquis did not speak in general with any great veneration of the clergy. “I must hear your wonderful man,” said he; and the Marquis waited upon him the next day — that is to-day. The sight of a great multitude, particularly when they come together to worship the Supreme Being, naturally affects us, and evidently makes a greater impression upon our mind if we have not been accustomed to it. He that feels it not is destitute of sensibility. The Prince confirmed my opinion. He was in raptures. The richness and splendour of the church, the greatness of the multitude, that showed, at least externally, signs of the sincerest devotion, contributed to augment the astonishment and reverence of the Prince. I should be but little acquainted with mankind, if I did not know that the brightest geniuses are attracted by pageantry; and, that the illuminations and laughable ceremonies of the Roman church work powerfully upon the mind. The incense, which is burnt at the altar, is very apt also to operate upon our senses and excite our piety. Enchanting music began the ceremony. At last the Bishop went into the pulpit. — The Marquis was right; his description was far excelled by the man himself: — his appearance made us venerate him, and his enchanting countenance, which seemed to have upon it the stamp of divinity, influenced every one in his favour. — And when he began to speak! I might say with justice, that I never heard so much persuasive eloquence, united with such dignity and personal elegance. In one word, he is a preacher of great talents. At first he struck us with depth of thought, which had so much the more weight on account of his delivery. He then moved and awakened in us the warmest feelings for virtue and religion, and the

greatest desire to follow his precepts, as the real principles of morality. From his mouth came truth; and we soon perceived how much he had studied it, and how firmly he himself was convinced of it: he pierced the heart, and was affected by his own eloquence. His voice is clear and solemn, and suited to bring the hardened sinner back to the path of virtue. When he preaches of love, there is a sweetness in his delivery not to be imagined; and he is firm and energetic when he will convince. — Oh, Friend! you must hear him yourself, if you will not believe me; for where am I to find words to convey to you the perfection of one idea only?

He preached on the following subject: “The advantages which accrue to a man from religion supported by the dictates of reason;” a subject that was as applicable to the situation of the Prince’s mind as if it had been purposely chosen. The whole of his sermon was divided into two heads. In the first he endeavoured to prove — “That religion ennobles our minds, and stimulates us to good actions, and is a firm support to us when oppressed with afflictions.” And how admirably he proved it! One could not but be convinced. “Self-love,” said he among other things, “as long as it does not become self-admiration, and consequently a vice, is the first and most distinguished principle which the wise Creator has implanted in us. From it we derive all our actions, even the most sublime ones which approximate us to the Divinity—we admire a friend for the return of his affection—we love our relations—we assist the sufferer, and often save the lives of our neighbours, even at the greatest hazard; because we expect the same treatment in similar situations: we pardon our enemies, for the sake of those heavenly feelings which tell us, that we have acted nobly, and have advanced a step towards perfection! But how often does man act well, and is unknown; and how often has the best design a false operation; how often the good man suffers, because he acts consistently with his feelings! Shall he, for that reason, discontinue his efforts? No—he ought not to do it, even if his religion did not promise him a recompense in another world, if it did not tell him,

‘Thy Creator knows the goodness of thy heart—the Lord knows it, if men do not acknowledge it.’ But I do not think, my friends, that I ought to allow man so much virtue as to suppose that he acts uprightly merely for its own sake; for we are never free from the influence of our passions, which throw obstacles in our way in spite of all our endeavours to avoid them.

“Can we blame him who prefers the enchanting path of vice to that of virtue? Look into your own hearts, and answer me that question. But when religion intervenes, she tells us, with certainty, that there is another life beyond the grave, in which men will be rewarded according to their deserts. What an inducement is this for us to become better, and faithfully to fulfil all our duties! what a great consolation, when we labour under misfortunes, to be able to say to ourselves, ‘Our life in this world is but a pilgrimage to the realms of everlasting peace!’

“With what anxiety does the tired wanderer endeavour to reach the place of his destination, though he knows that the break of day will call him forth to the continuation of his journey! how cheerfully he supports fatigue and trouble, when he recollects that he is pursuing the path which leads him to his home, where he will meet his friends and relations! Can we then do less, my friends, when we know that eternal joy will be our recompense, and that we shall approach nearer to that God who gave us friends and relations, who watches over the smallest circumstance of our fate, and even fastens the chain of our happiness on that which seemed to us to be unpropitious to it?”

He now turned to the second part of his sermon, and showed “what great tranquillity religion gave us in death.” You should have heard this part. He drew a beautiful comparison between the death-bed of the pious and wicked man. He alluded also to sceptics; for, said he—“How can they be good, who believe not in any thing?—They must be more than men if, amidst all the oppressions of an unfeeling world, they look not for a reward for all their good actions in heaven. Upon what grounds does the Atheist banish from his mind the just ideas of a Creator,

and his divine influence? Is it that it would add more weight to the barrier that separates his soul from the paths of lust and wickedness?"

The manner in which he described the last hours of the profligate must have pierced a heart of steel. He knew how to affect the virtuous, by forcibly describing such a death; and I might say with justice, that there was not one person present who did not seem to study his own reformation. And when he described the end of the impious, an icy coldness ran through my veins.—Every countenance seemed pictured with horror.—I looked at the Prince;—he was as pale as death, and appeared very much agitated. I hope it will be of service to him! That part of the sermon was delivered with such effect, that it was as if the dying person had been present, imploring the restitution of his health, that he might adore that God whom he had uniformly denied. But when he commented upon the impossibility of his wishes, as he was struggling with death, his eye rolled doubtfully, his voice sounded hollow, and death seemed to cut the thread of the curses which his stammering tongue uttered!—It was horrible. The voice of the Bishop added the greatest effect to this part. He stopped. There ensued a profound silence.

"And where shall we find the religion I have described?" he continued: "God be thanked, we have discovered it in our own! Oh, my friends! you must acknowledge the advantage we have over so many thousands, who are not born of Christian parents, and who are obliged to live in darkness, whilst the clearest light shines upon you."

The manner in which he executed his task you must imagine, for I cannot attempt to describe the enchanting sweetness of his eloquence, and am only able to give you an imperfect idea of it. You may judge what effect this sermon must have produced in the mind of the Prince. Receive this as a recompense for not having heard him yourself. I could easily perceive that he was a Roman Catholic: but if they had acted thus in the times of Luther, if they had preached religion so pure, I believe there never would have been a reformation. He also men-

tioned the saints — but how? He represented them as a glorious host, worthy of imitation. And is not this admirable? I believe men cannot have too many good examples. But my fancy leads me too far, and I should not choose to write any thing contrary to what the Bishop said. For that reason, I will lay aside my pen until I am more familiar with the subject. Yet who knows whether the whole sermon be not a plan of the Armenian? — Perhaps the Bishop is one of the ——. I will not tell you what I think. It will be terrible if he is a hypocrite, and employs his uncommon talents to further the execution of a plan which cannot possibly have a good end; because it requires so much artifice and cunning to complete it. No, no — I must not indulge such an idea.

Several days later.

Since that sermon the Prince has again given himself up to meditation. He shuns all society; and, if he is obliged to join them, he appears perfectly indifferent to any thing but reflection. But this seriousness is very different from his former; his countenance then expressed despair, but now a deep melancholy. He has anxiously and studiously enquired after the Bishop. This man, I trust, will entirely work his reformation, and the Prince expects it; his enquiry also makes this certain: he will, in all probability, draw a comparison between his own actions and that man's manner of thinking — and he is right. The Bishop did the same when he mentioned our Saviour: "From their fruits you shall know them." — Very probably this induced the Prince to adopt that resolution; but outward actions are often so contrary to real principles, that one may easily be mistaken. But the Bishop is entirely that which he himself expects from a good Christian or a noble mind, and he follows very exactly the rules which he prescribes.

I have this merely from hearsay; but where accounts agree exactly, we may put some confidence in the report. He is a father to the orphans, and a friend to the poor. He expends upon himself nothing but what is absolutely requisite, the other part of his fortune he reserves to fulfil

the duties of his station ; and the prudence with which he bestows his charity gives it a high and deserved lustre. Those who prefer idleness to industry obtain very little from him ; but all those who are prevented by a noble pride from accepting a gift from the hand of charity, and those who are oppressed with misfortunes, and struggle against want and misery, have in him a certain and benevolent supporter. He has a list of all the poor people in Venice, and assists those he thinks the most deserving. It appeared singular to me, that he spent so much money amongst foreigners who live here. Indeed the Venetians do not deserve it, for the cause of their poverty is their idleness ; there scarcely can be made one exception. He always is respectful to his inferiors ; and is a perfect enemy to that pride which makes part of the character of a priest. To his servants, who have all grown old in his service, he is a father. In short, every thing that I hear of this man is in his praise. But the history which the Marquis has related of him, is a proof that he well knows how to observe the higher duties of his situation, which has made me venerate his character. A certain — ti — here was his deadly enemy. Perhaps he envied his merits, and the esteem which was every where shown him. This was a sufficient reason for a jealous villain to hate him. To imitate him he was unable, but he was capable of endeavouring to murder him. He was big with this diabolical idea ; but the retired life of the Bishop, and the multitude which always conducted him home, to enjoy his company, made the execution of it always impossible.—Amongst the servants of the Bishop there was a young man whom he sincerely loved, and educated. Although endowed with many good qualities, he was attached to gaming ; upon which the Bishop sometimes gave him a severe lecture. This young man — anti — endeavoured to make an instrument of his villany. He could not do any thing by fair means, and therefore had recourse to treachery. He hired people to induce him to pursue the most extravagant plans, and to deprive him of his money by any method. The vice of gaming soon took deep root, and his very existence seemed to depend upon it. If what his master gave him

was not sufficient, he resorted to theft. The Bishop, far from being suspicious, concluded that the deficiency of his money arose from his forgetfulness, and did not accuse any of his people ; but it was soon more and more visible, and the Bishop, at last, became uneasy, particularly as he missed some valuable things. The thief was discovered. Not quite hardened in his wickedness, his confusion and down-cast eyes betrayed him ; he could not look in the face of his benefactor. The Bishop admonished him with severity, but he was too far gone to feel its effect. His villanous companions had so corrupted him by their wicked advice, that he was a finished gambler ; and what is it that is sacred in the eyes of such an infamous character ? — It was not difficult to persuade him to mix a powder in the chocolate which he always served to his patron, and by that means poison his benefactor and friend. He was induced to undertake this diabolical act by the promise of a large reward, and also the certainty of gaining something by his master's death, which he had discovered by prying into his will, which was placed in a writing-desk. His limbs trembled as he presented the cup to his master, so that he had almost let it drop. The Bishop was engaged in reading a book, and did not observe the uneasiness and anxiety which tormented his servant. He did not take the cup before he had finished the chapter. When he had done, he repeated the last passage : “ If the first principles of vice are imbibed, the rest is to be acquired very easily by a hardened sinner.” — “ Yes, it is ; indeed it is,” he added with a deep sigh.

At the same moment the unfaithful wretch fell senseless at his feet, the cup was broken, and the poison spilled upon the ground. He thought that his master was conscious of his malicious intention, and had spoken those words purposely to warn him of his wicked design. But how could a mind like his entertain such a thought, or suspect a man, to whom he had shown the attention of a father, capable of so vile an action ? He endeavoured to recall a wretch to life who was on the point of taking away his own. During that time, a little dog, which had licked up the poisoned draught, tumbled in a convulsive manner about the room.

He immediately perceived what was going forward. Tears came into the old man's eyes when he reflected that his servant could be guilty of such a crime. And how do you imagine that he treated him? He not only pardoned him, and concealed the fact, but retained him in his service, as if nothing had happened. One of his relations reproached him for this forbearance.

"Shall I make this man more miserable than he is at present?" he replied. "If he is to be reclaimed, it will certainly be effected by my treatment; and how much glory shall I acquire if I save but one soul! — If I discard him, I believe he will then become a perfect villain; on the contrary, he probably, by my indulgence, may be reclaimed." When it was observed to him, that he should be upon his guard in future against any new attempts to murder him, he answered, — "A good and benevolent God watches over the life of a sparrow; can I doubt, then, that he is not mindful of mine? The path which he has prescribed to me no mortal can obstruct; of that I have already many proofs. If it pleases the Almighty that I should die by the hand of an assassin, there will be found others besides him to perpetrate the deed."

He stood firmly to his opinion, and — oh! the recompense! It has succeeded in a most excellent manner: — he has entirely converted this man, and beholds daily the proofs of the warmest gratitude, and there is not one about his person that is more attached to him. The Bishop discovered the motive that induced him to seek his life. He could have made the miserable projector of it feel his wrath; but what did he do? He went to — anti —, his deadly enemy, and begged his pardon if he had given him any reason to hate him, and offered him his hand in reconciliation. Such a virtue the basest ingrate could not despise: he was overpowered with sorrow, and falling upon his knees, craved his merciful forgiveness, and promised to amend his life; which he has faithfully performed. The reason why he hated the Bishop was, as he said, on account of a sermon, in which he felt himself very much aggrieved; and also that it was intolerable to hear him so generally praised and beloved. You must know, — anti — is also a

priest, and he thought that they were bestowing that portion of praise due to him upon the Bishop.

The Prince wishes to be acquainted with the Bishop. I rejoice that it is so, and hope he will profit by the connection. How it has happened that he was not sooner acquainted with him, I cannot tell. The noble-minded man must be sought for, but other acquaintances are very easily attained. No wonder, for he is a Prince ! I must not forget to tell you that, a few days ago, the Bucentauro was abolished ; not by the senate, but the society having consented to it themselves.—What do you say to that?—The reason for it I do not know, and even the Prince seemed ignorant of it ; for, although they told him they had done it because they disliked it, he will not believe it.—Perhaps the inquisition has prohibited their meetings, and they are afraid to run the risk of having their principles exposed ; or, perhaps, the cunning Bucentaurists are in league with the Armenian, and wish, by the separation of their society, to fix the attention of the Prince upon another point. Let this be as it may, I am satisfied. The Prince is rejoiced at the event ; for, without it, he could not well have separated himself from it :—a proof that he was not quite fit for a society, which did not seem to me to be founded on a good principle.

The same to the same.

November 18th.

At last the Prince's wish is fulfilled : the Bishop has been with him. He has been a journey, which has prevented him, till now, from complying with the request of the Prince.—I thought he was a middle-aged man from his appearance ; I was astonished when I accidentally heard from him that he was already far advanced towards seventy.—His uncommon health and gaiety is the consequence of a moderate manner of living. The Prince has been charmed with his company.—No person, besides me, could attend to their conversation, because they believed I did not understand it. How many advantages have I already reaped from affecting to be unacquainted with the Venetian language. They look upon me always as an absent person :

and I must tell you that I am, on that account, a great acquisition to the Prince ; because he thinks that he has an attendant by him at all times whom he has no suspicion of ; for he is too prudent to trust the other servants in the antechamber, on account of their curiosity. With open arms the Prince received the Bishop, when he entered the house, and conducted him into his room.

“ I heard your sermon not long ago, great and noble man, and it affected me very much. I have had a description of your character and conduct, and it has increased my esteem for you.— It is on that account that I approach you without the accustomed ceremonies, and with a friendly veneration.” “ Prince, your countenance is so sincere, that I cannot consider your words as a joke.” “ Joke ! — joke ! — Good God ! what an opinion you must have of me !” “ Not so ; but is it possible that one single sermon can have had such an effect upon you ? — I am not accustomed to severity, Prince. But many years’ experience have taught me, that persons like you, who despise all that is sacred and good, cannot easily be brought to esteem those who speak of a God, whom they reject and deny. On that account, you must at least think me a pious simpleton, who merits your compassionate smile.”

The Prince was dumb. At last he exclaimed : “ Oh ! as you love your enemies, do good to them, and confirm the truth of your doctrines, which you preach with such eloquence.— Do not let me be the being whom you despise— I have pursued a wrong path, not willingly, but through the influence of deceit and iniquity. I have long wandered in the desert, and could find no resting-place : will you now reject a penitent, who puts his whole confidence in your superior wisdom ?” With great warmth the Bishop took him by the hand. “ Entertain not such an idea. But if the surgeon will cure a dangerous wound, he must first probe it with his instrument, to try how deep it has penetrated. This operation is indeed very painful to the patient ; but can the surgeon undertake the cure without it ? Will he not learn by that, what means must be employed ? — I must first sound you, and upon the good foundation which, perhaps, may still be left, I will build my structure. God be thanked, who works so powerfully by such feeble means.

I should not have believed that my sermon could produce such an effect upon your mind. The way to the heart of a Prince is, in such a case, very difficult, and your sufferings only have made you so susceptible.—Thank God, that you are not above enquiry.—I always speak the truth, Prince; do not wonder, because you hear it very rarely.” “Will you, then, be so kind as to instruct me?” “Why not?—It is my duty.—It is well for you that you came before me. When they begged of me to preach that sermon, I was struck with the idea that it might be of service, and save you.”

The Prince interrupted him: “How! they entreated you to preach a sermon to me—was it not then mere accident?” “I was instructed as to every particular.” “And by whom?” “I do not know him; but the anxiety which he displayed for your welfare, and on which he seemed to dwell with uncommon concern, has made him dear to me.—He expected from my sermon much effect, and promised that you should be present. The desire I had of doing good made me comply with his request.”

And can you guess who this man was? The Armenian—You are astonished, and I not less; the Prince was half-mad. He related to the Bishop several things which had happened to him with this wonderful man, and hoped to obtain some knowledge of him; but he assured him, that he had seen him then for the first time in his life. And who would not believe him? What are we to think of this? Perhaps it is part of the plan upon which the old man spoke to Biondello.—We may suspect what will be the consequence of the visit; for the society of the Bishop must turn to the Prince’s advantage. If they make him a proselyte by means of the Bishop, they would not find their end answered; because this man is calculated to set a good example, and to instil into the Prince’s mind the best ideas without letting the religion he professes interfere.—It is a great pity that they did not converse on the subject of the Prince’s opinions; for they constantly talked about the Armenian, and then some business of consequence called the Bishop away. He promised to return again, and the Prince has determined to visit him.

As Civitella persuaded the Prince to go with him to

church, what was more natural than that the Prince should suspect that he was connected with the Armenian? To be convinced of that, he sent immediately for the Marquis to wait upon him. The servant met him at the gate. "Marquis," exclaimed the Prince, as he entered the room, "your visit is well timed; I had just sent to invite you here, to question you upon a subject of great importance. You know how much trouble the Armenian has already given me. Now I am confident you must be acquainted with him. I expect an explanation from you." The Marquis was alarmed, and answered not a syllable; the words seemed to tremble on his lips. "You will not then give me an explanation? You are the only person that can do it." "Explanation!—Indeed I am not able to give it you, and perhaps no mortal living." "And yet you spoke to him!" "Alas! Gracious Heaven! I spoke to him!" "If a spark of friendship glimmers in your breast, tell me instantly what you know of him." "Demand my life, gracious Prince, I willingly will sacrifice it, for you have deserved it—but ——"

He hesitated, and became visibly more confused. — The Prince's patience left him. "You will not then," he exclaimed violently — "Now hear me. I know that you and the Armenian are in league with each other. Was it not at his request that you persuaded me to go with you to the church of St. Mark?" The Marquis fell into a terrible convulsive fit.—His limbs trembled, his teeth chattered, and his countenance was black and horrible to look on. The fit increased, and we were obliged to carry him home. The Prince now thought him innocent, and seemed to feel for him. "But if he is innocent, whence this strange conduct?" he exclaimed.

Several hours had passed, when a servant of the Marquis came, breathless, and requested the Prince to go immediately to his master, who had something of great importance to discover to him. He hesitated not a moment, but went as quickly as possible. After an interval of four hours, he came back again in deep thought. He related what happened to him to the Baron F——; and as I was present, and heard every thing very dis-

tinctly, I am able to communicate it to you word for word. The Prince threw himself into an arm-chair, and seemed very much affected. The Baron F—— approached him with great concern, not being able to conceal his sensations. “You will pardon me, gracious Prince, I am confident, when I entreat you to make a discovery of that which afflicts you so much. It will be preserved as a sacred treasure in the bosom of one of your most humble and faithful servants, whose sincere wish is to sacrifice himself, if it could in any manner promote your happiness. There was a time when you thought me worthy of your confidence.”

The Prince seemed to start as from a dream, and looked suspiciously at the Baron. “Yes, you are right; there was a time, when the repose of my soul resembled the smooth surface of a lake, from which every object is reflected in the most beautiful manner. Yes, yes—there was once such a time, and then I found myself happy.—Can I help regretting that that period is past, and all is now as if influenced by the storms of heaven; and that nothing remains for me but a lively picture of my former situation? Tell me yourself, can I forget it?” Tears came into the eyes of the good Baron F——, and sorrow almost overpowered his speech. “Oh! my gracious Prince, I have not deserved this—I spoke of the confidence which I once enjoyed.”

The Prince came to his recollection, perhaps by my pushing something against his arm-chair; in the mean time, for appearance’ sake, I affected to have some business in the room. “Did you not intend to ask something of me, dear Baron?” “To entreat your highness to discover to me the sorrow which oppresses you.” “And what end will that answer? Can you assist me? Can you conduct me from a labyrinth in which I find myself every hour more and more bewildered?” “If I am not able to effect the last, will your highness refuse me the happiness to share your misfortunes with you?”

The Prince looked at him sternly. It seemed to convey a great deal of information.—What if the Baron has written something to Count O—— which he is not able to

answer in such a manner as to clear his character ! “ You shall, you must know it,” said he at last : — “ for I am well convinced of your secrecy as to every thing that concerns me !” At these words F—— changed colour, and the Prince, perceiving it, went on : — “ You know that I was called to the Marquis. I found him very ill. He had scarcely sufficient strength to raise himself in his bed, and to give me his hand. ‘ I have invited you to call on me,’ said he, ‘ to give you a key to my conduct to-day. I am at the brink of the grave, and should not like you to be impressed with the idea that I have deceived you. I know not the Armenian who is so much concerned in your history. I saw him but once in my life ; your suspicion was unfounded. How could I have a communication with a being that is supernatural ? — He appeared to me, and commanded me to persuade you to go to that church. If I fulfilled his request, he would acknowledge my obedience to his command. It was for that purpose only that he had selected me, and I know not that it was actually necessary. I listened to his commands with terror, and should have fulfilled them even if parricide had been required to do it. He desired me, however, to observe the most profound secrecy ; but my love for you induces me to violate my promise, and, as I am verging towards the end of my days, nothing of any consequence can befall me. Be it what it may it will only hasten my death, which I look upon now as a welcome friend ; the very idea of it raises my soul to the highest pitch of ecstasy. — Now arm yourself with courage, dearest Prince, to hear a history that will make your hairs stand erect ; and which will give you an idea of the supernatural greatness of that Armenian. To him may be ascribed my acquaintance with you, and my present illness ; for I was just on the point of answering your request, to justify not only my character, but to give you also a perfect idea of this being. I thought in such a case I was acting right, but I found my tongue cleave to the roof of my mouth, and all animation suspended ! — I have at present nothing more to dread, as death and my love for you raise me above the power of fear : perhaps my discoveries may be useful to you.’

“ He stopped suddenly. — The hasty manner with which he spoke those last words did not escape me. — He now seized my hand with great violence, and hurt me so much that I still feel the pain. ‘ Alas! protect me — protect me from his wrath,’ he exclaimed, with a voice that chilled my very soul with horror.

“ Thou hast not gone through the trial which thou oughtest to have done, in order to gain admission into the Temple of Truth, which thy mind entitled thee to. Attribute to thyself the consequences of thy obstinacy. Thou wast very disobedient to me! I warned thee, thou didst not attend. Oh, fool! if thou hadst not been at this present moment disobedient, thou wouldst have soon reached the goal.’

“ ‘ These words were spoken by some one behind me, the voice of whom seemed to be known to me. I looked up, and perceived the Armenian. My astonishment was beyond all conception. — He walked with a slow step through the room, and the door seemed to shut itself after him. My recollection returned. Whatever I might undergo, the desire of speaking to him superseded all my fears. I rushed out of the room, but no Armenian was to be seen or heard of. Upon the stairs I met an old priest, who had been sent to the Marquis to give him extreme unction. I thought he could not have escaped him, but he had seen nothing of him. That he had secreted himself was not in any manner possible, for he was obliged to go either down or up the staircase, and the Cardinal, who had just come down, in the greatest sorrow, on account of the situation of his beloved nephew (who, as you know, by his reformed manner of life had again acquired his esteem), had likewise seen nothing of him. My mind was now tormented with doubt and horror. I went back with the Cardinal to the room. He found the Marquis senseless. I flattered myself that he would recover, and finish the history which had excited my curiosity so much. But I hoped in vain; he continued delirious. The Cardinal refused consolation, and abandoned himself to despair. I could not endure a sight so distressing, and when I reflected upon my own situation I was half dis-

tracted. 'I would readily sacrifice my life,' ejaculated I, 'could I but discover the Armenian.'

" 'You will discover him, ere long. — You shall be nearer acquainted with him, if your obedience makes you worthy of it,' exclaimed a hollow, piercing voice.' "

The Prince here paused, and seemed lost in meditation.

This very evening, at a late hour, we heard that the Marquis Civitella was no more. The Prince received the news with melancholy silence. I could plainly see how deeply he felt his loss.

The same to the same.

November 17.

They have threatened to imprison the Prince, if he does not pay his debts in twenty-four hours. I thought it would come to this; although I did not believe that he had received his loans from the hands of usurers. All the creditors of the Prince are alarmed; for his insolvent situation is every where known. The poor Prince! How shall we save him? You are not able to do it; for, in all probability, the money you are possessed of is not sufficient. To extricate himself, he has offered to pay enormous interest, which exceeds even half of the capital. He has no friend to whom he can unfold his distress. The kind Marquis is dead, and his uncle, the Cardinal, has, since his decease, lost his senses, and is not to be spoken with. The situation of the Prince is truly pitiable. Flight would be the only means to save him. Biondello proposed it to him; but he is too noble to degrade his character by such a step. He will wait the event with fortitude.

November 18.

To-day I heard that the Prince is not so much involved as I at first expected. The whole amount of his debts, with the interest, is about one hundred thousand zechins; a large sum certainly to be spent in so short a time, but I hope that you will procure it. You have not told me how much you have received, but that it is a large sum I easily can imagine. God be thanked that it is so, and that the Prince met with this misfortune; it will probably be the

road to his safety. Oh ! how anxiously I wait for that period when you will rush into his arms, and save him as a friend ! Do not be astonished that I now contradict my former opinion, and beg that you will discover yourself to him ; it is surely the best plan we can pursue. He will, in his present situation, acknowledge your kindness with double the gratitude. Such affection will rivet him to you for ever. You will represent me to him as your friend, who worked with you for his safety ; my letters to you, and moreover my ability in mountebank tricks, by which they have deceived him, will convince him of the fact, and will open his eyes, or at least may give him a suspicion of the people in whom he has put so much confidence. We shall save him ; he will fly with us from this vile city, and be restored [and reconciled to his court. Oh ! that I were able to relate to you all the good consequences which will follow this proceeding ! But all this is unnecessary ; you do not want any inducement to urge you to act magnanimously, — but use all the expedition in your power, for, before sun-set, the Prince will be arrested, and he cannot expect any indulgence from usurers !

P. S. Do not give yourself any further trouble, friend ; all our fears for the present are gone. The debts of the Prince are paid, and he has obtained further sums of money just as I was going to seal this letter. But misfortune sometimes proves a benefit, for what should we have done if I had known it a few hours later ? We should have betrayed ourselves, and perhaps have lost all means to prosecute our undertaking. But I still have great hopes, and it makes me tolerably easy in my unpleasant situation. And do you know who has paid all these sums ? — The Armenian ! For what reason does this man haunt the Prince ? This is a certain proof that the scheme they are trying is of consequence. The Prince was prepared for the arrest ; and conceive his astonishment, when the creditors came to give him their receipts, and returned him the money he had advanced to them on account. They all begged pardon for their conduct, and assured him that they would not have taken violent measures if they had not been made anxious for their money, and to lose it would have made them

beggars. Who urged them to be so clamorous he could not imagine. Although the Prince was astonished that the Armenian had paid his debts, he had sense enough to appear as if he knew of the proceeding, and this induced the creditors to think that the money came from his court. The Armenian could not have found a better opportunity to make the Prince attached to him. He thinks of nothing but him, and is more anxious to learn who he is: he has forgotten Civitella's death. You go about the town in different characters—have you not been able to find out who the Armenian is?

The same to the same.

November 23.

THE Prince is always with the Bishop, and I know that their conversation is generally upon religious topics. It is a great pity that I cannot constantly be present, for I hear only detached sentences, but from them I conclude that the Prince will remain firm to his opinion, until thoroughly convinced to the contrary. The Bishop appears every hour in a more amiable light. The mildness which he always shows, when endeavouring to controvert the objections of the Prince (which I must confess are often supported with great warmth), is inimitable, and is the sincerest proof how much he wishes to appear like the man of God, whose doctrines he preaches. His talents in theology, added to his eloquence, place every thing in the clearest light, so that it is impossible for any person to misunderstand him.

It always gave me the greatest happiness to assist such a conversation, if it was possible for me to do it. To-day I was very fortunate. I will put as much of the conversation down as I can recollect. You will wonder that the Bishop does not betray the Catholic, who with the sword of faith cuts his way through all difficulties. He wishes to explain them, and to show fundamentally to the Prince how much is gained by a religion which adopts a Supreme Being, and holds out a recompense for our good actions. It is very seldom that he mentions the proscribed religion in the Holy Scriptures; and if he does, it is only when the Prince enquires about it. You see that he does not press it upon

him, but goes step by step. — I am wandering from the subject: — I promised to relate to you to day's conversation. With the greatest impatience the Prince waited for the Bishop; at last he came. He hastened to conduct him to his arm-chair, which is always set ready for him.

“ I have waited with anxiety for your arrival, dear father! A new doubt has arisen within me concerning the existence of a Supreme Being.” “ A doubt of the existence of a Supreme Being! — Oh! I am very sorry for that! Then we are not so far advanced as I believed. How is it possible that you can even admit such a thought?” “ I have been reading this book — it is beautifully written — so convincing!” (here he gave the book to the Bishop.) “ Not convincing, Prince, but seductive. Truth does not want any colour. I know the book: it is beautifully written, and for that reason so much the more dangerous. We feel not immediately the effect of poison that is hidden beneath sugar, and when we discover it, antidotes come too late.”

At these words the book was thrown into the fire and consumed. The Prince looked at the Bishop with a countenance full of anger. This did not escape the Bishop. “ Do you regret the loss of the book? If so, I am sorry that I destroyed it! But I hope not!” “ You told me yourself, that reasonable doubts would lead me nearer to the truth.” “ Yes, Prince; but did that book contain such? And if it were so, you should not read it in your present situation. It will make you more difficult to be brought into the way of truth, and probably prevent your obtaining that end, by the rejection of which you have lost so much already. A patient must submit to the prescriptions of the physician, and the convalescent must not be permitted to indulge in every kind of eatable for fear of a relapse, which often is more difficult to cure than the first illness. So soon as you have acquired the true principles to act upon, you may read that book: you will then pity the author, and become firmer in the support of truth.”

“ Permit me,” said the Prince, “ to ask you a few questions. Why do we worship God?” “ Because he is the most perfect being.” “ Whence do we know that?”

“ We infer so from the creation of the world.” “ But this conclusion would be wrong if the world created itself?” “ Undoubtedly.” “ There would also be no God, if he were not at the same time the Creator?” “ This follows from the idea which we have of him. An inactive God were no God at all, at least he could have no influence over us.” “ And if it were so?—if the creation were a matter of chance?” “ If I thought that in any manner possible, I would give up my opinion without hesitation.” “ Possible! You agree with me that all things are possible.” “ The ideas of a madman!” “ Do you reckon then that the learned, witty, and spirited Voltaire was mad?”

“ He proves it himself by many of his opinions. But do you not believe that a madman may be reasonable in several things, whilst his malady centres upon one particular point? Have you not experienced it by a living example in father Florentino, who thought that he was the Holy Ghost; and yet in every thing else was a rational and clever man?” “ But the difference is, that the former had grounds for his opinion, but the latter none.” “ Have you ever heard them? And will you honour his folly with the name of reason? I could, on the retrospect of your Voltaire, return the objection upon you: but we are departing from our point. Tell me sincerely, do you not perceive the absurdity of the idea that the world created itself? Is the Creator and the creature the same? Did not the contradiction strike you at the first moment? Is it easier for you, and more adequate to your reason, to believe that the world was formed by chance, than to acknowledge an almighty, all wise, and good Creator? Oh! Prince, how much are you corrupted by this shameful book!”

“ Certainly, if you suppose that the world, before it existed, possessed within itself a power by which it produced itself, this would be undoubtedly the greatest contradiction: but I do not suppose so; its materials did exist, and consisted merely in little solid indivisible bodies or parts, which are called atoms. These from their gravity had been falling from eternity, in perpendicular lines, through the immensity of space. One of these forsook fortuitously its perpendicular direction, carried along with

it a second, and these two still more; and from this concurrence arose heaven and earth, and all which exists in them." "And you take this nonsense for probability? However, we will consider every part of your system separately, which you must not think to be the invention of your author; for first Democritus, and after him Epicurus, adopted it: and Cicero has so excellently refuted it, that this alone would be quite sufficient. He says, somewhere, to the best of my recollection *, — 'That any one should maintain that this beautiful and perfect world was formed accidentally from single and solid corpuscles, I am not much surprised; but I do not at all perceive, why such a one should not believe, that if we shook together a great number of letters, and then threw them upon the earth, the Annals of Ennius would arise from them. I do not think that chance could ever compose one verse. And still further, if I am not mistaken,' continues he, 'if the world could have been formed by the junction of atoms, why did they not form some city, or a colonnade, or temple, or a house, since all these require less, and are more easily constructed?' However, as I said before, we will not rest our proofs upon the authority of another, but go regularly through the system; for it loses much by the hypothesis with which you are obliged to preface it. You suppose it space, in which the atoms existed, and were falling perpendicularly; that accident has driven one from its course towards another, and that these two again carried away more with them, and by that means every thing was created. Now give me leave to ask you — What is space? Can you form to yourself any other idea of it than (what expression must I use) the circumference of the universe?"

The Prince remained silent.

"I cannot," resumed the Bishop. "To me the idea of space is inseparable from that of the corporeal world, as the idea of shade is from that of light. And if you suppose an infinite space! It does not, however, follow from that, that an infinite number of bodies also must have existed, which it had surrounded; or, if you like it better, by which it had been surrounded! For would not this be a

* De Nat. Deor. ii. 37.

new contradiction? However, we will let that alone; for the idea of space is beyond my philosophy, and I had rather confess this, than dogmatically obtrude my opinion upon any one. But let us proceed still further. I will ask you, what the atoms must peculiarly be; for you could give me no other answer on that head than proposing to me, as you already have done, a new hypothesis. But how can you maintain that they fell perpendicularly, as there existed no basis from which they could at first have taken their position? What was in the boundless and empty space according to your ideas, either beneath or above? And if I should not consider that, but suppose every thing to have been as you say it was, what power was it, then, which drove the first of those atoms from its original direction towards another, and these again to others? And, in short, where was the point at which they ceased to fall in perpendicular lines? Was it chance? Must that not also have its origin? or, to express myself more clearly, must not some power precede that which causes this chance? If we know that power, we no longer call it chance. From hence it seems, that a circumstance may appear to be accidental to one person and not to another. Is this evident to you?"

"Perfectly." "Does it not still follow that a circumstance may appear to us merely accidental, which is not so in itself?" "It does not seem to be otherwise." "That moreover the concatenation of the atoms cannot be in itself accidental, but must only appear so to us?" "Certainly." "And how, if chance brought them together, must not one of them have wandered from its original direction? Is not this as much as saying that there was a power previously existing which caused this?" "After all the conclusions which you premised, it must be so!"

"And what is this power, if it is not God?—Do not these contradictions strike you?—But to conclude entirely; I will grant that every thing hitherto was the effect of thought. Who arranged these atoms so as to form such an admirable and wonderful masterpiece as the boundless universe? Who breathed life into man and brute? Who was able to unite every thing together, so that there is no-

where to be found one vacancy, but in every place the most perfect order? Who created those atoms? Oh, Prince! do you not feel within yourself that it must be a God?" "Yes, I feel it, and always have felt it; but I would willingly be able to prove it, and from thence arose my doubts. Would you have me take a sentiment for truth?" "To what point will you at last come!—Is not the reflection that there is a God, who watches over our fate, more agreeable than the supposition that we are dependent upon chance?" "Yes; upon that very ground I should like to have incontrovertible reasons to convince me of it."

"Oh, Prince! I am sorry that you should still desire them. How could you by your feeble reason form an idea of a being for whom we have not even any sufficient expression; who is far too sublime to be represented at all by us." "But why should our understandings be limited exactly there, when it would be so beneficial to us if we could see further?" "Why has not a child the understanding of a man?—Could not God, when he was forming his creatures, give them the minds of angels?—And is a truth less a truth because we cannot prove it *à priori*?—Can you prove to any one the existence of the sun, or even your own existence?" "He sees both, and that is the best proof." "But how will you convince an idealist, who considers every thing except himself as a deception?—You see from this, that the most evident and clearest truths are the least demonstrable except by experience. Yet I will see whether the creature is able to give a proof of the existence of his eternal Creator! If you discover upon a desert island some considerable work, would you not conclude from thence that men must have lived there before, to whom it owes its origin?" "Undoubtedly." "Or could you suppose that the wind had driven together the materials from every country, and united them together according to the rules of art? Would you not think him a madman who would support such a supposition?" "I could not think otherwise." "And what is more natural than the conclusion—that there is a world, and consequently a Creator. We perceive the effect, and must ac-

knowledge the cause. To me this is very clear ; and if you will not grant that, you must, however, at least confess that we have more proofs for than against the existence of a God ! And if this is the case, acknowledge then with humility the limits of our reason, which we cannot go beyond without irrecoverably bewildering ourselves, and adore that which you cannot comprehend."

During this discourse the night had come on. The heavens were serene, and illuminated with sparkling stars. The Bishop opened the window, and led the Prince to it. " Behold ! " said he, " the immeasurable expanse, in which are myriads of worlds, that our eye is not able to reach. Adore him whom you are not able to comprehend ! " The Prince sunk upon his knees, and the Bishop with him. " Yes—here in the dust do I adore thee, O Eternal God ! Oh pardon, pardon the weakness of thy feeble creature ! —Thou universe, and ye innumerable worlds, proclaim to me that there is a God, our Creator ! Yes—THOU ART ! THOU ART ! "

To this scene, which never will be erased from my memory, there succeeded a long pause. No sound of prayer was perceptible ; but it was sufficiently evident from the countenance of the supplicants that no words could express their feelings, which could only be intelligible to him who knows our thoughts even before they exist.

The same to the same.

December 2d.

It is true that, for this time, my letter will reach you a considerable time later than formerly. I had no subject to write upon ; all is in *statu quo*. The Bishop visits the Prince, and the Prince returns his visit ; their fondness for each other increases daily. But it is very singular to me that the Prince should find it so difficult to pursue the right road. He is now in the extreme, and it wants very little to make him a bigoted fanatic. Whilst he acknowledges the principal truths of our religion, other ideas have again associated themselves, which, perhaps, prejudice and education have cemented to his soul, and render it, for that reason, more difficult for him to get the better of them.

The Bishop is not at all pleased with that ; but what can he do ? He is afraid to root out the wheat with the weeds, and seems only to wait for a certain time, when he has nothing more to fear from that ; and the Prince is convinced of the truth. To work there is nothing left untried.

The Prince has become acquainted through the Bishop with several priests, but principally with one Sebastian, who has shown a great affection for him, and is his perpetual companion. No wonder that he is very often with us, for the Prince (who has already reposed an unlimited confidence in the Bishop) looks upon this favourite in a very high light. Thus much is certain, that this Sebastian is a man of the world ; but that he is possessed of the goodness of heart which characterises the Bishop, I have my doubts. The hypocrite appears in his countenance, although he knows how to hide it. That the Bishop does not suspect him, proves nothing in favour of him that will subvert my opinion ; for it is well known that the best of hearts are frequently the easiest to be imposed upon. The Bishop has, indeed, great skill in finding out the character of a man ; but he did not see this Sebastian behind the scenes, as I did : they think nothing of him, and, on that account, do not suspect him. What confirms the truth of my former assertion, is, that Sebastian encourages the Prince in his fanatical manner of thinking ; he acts thus before him ; but, when the Bishop is present, he displays again the man of science, who only is satisfied with the marrow, and throws away the bones. But with what skill he contrives all this you must judge for yourself. It is singular that the Prince did not discover any thing in him, although he is not quite blind in such cases. Yet I will, for the present, suspend my judgment. Perhaps I may have been mistaken. Since I have known the Bishop, I have quite another opinion of some of the priests here.

The Armenian and his companions have not made the least noise, and the Prince, desirous of hearing something certain about him, becomes daily more and more impatient ; for these words, "Thou shalt know him nearer, if thy obedience makes thee worthy of it," and also the history of Civitella, still perplex him. He cannot speak to the Car-

dinal ; for his illness has rather increased than lessened. To avoid any thing that might remind him of his nephew, he is gone to his estate in the country.

December 4th.

How shall I relate to you a piece of news which causes the greatest sorrow ! God of heaven ! Must every thing that is good and virtuous fall to the ground ? I was obliged to recover the shock I received before I could continue writing. The Bishop is dead ! To-day we receive the terrible news. He had an epileptic fit. All lament his death ; but the Prince is inconsolable. Alas ! he has suffered a great loss ! He was here last night, with several other priests and father Sebastian. He entertained the society till late at night with the vivacity of his conversation, and was so well pleased with his visit that he neglected going to rest at his usual hour, which he seldom missed. Before he went home, he complained of the headach ; but he observed also, that he had such attacks very often, and no person thought that they were the forerunners of bad consequences.— He is no more. If ever you shed tears for a good man, sacrifice one to the memory of him !— In him the Prince — alas ! not the Prince only ; in him the world has suffered an irreparable loss ! He was the firm supporter of humanity. I never spoke to him ; I only saw his actions ; but, from those, I cannot think any man ever was more worthy of esteem than he was. If saints are worshipped, he certainly ought to occupy the highest place among them ; for, although he neglected the scourge, he fulfilled the will, of God —

I have just left the Prince. He weeps for him !—Sorrow sometimes becomes a pleasure.— He had a great desire to see the corpse of his beloved friend once more ; but he was not admitted. They said that they had forwarded it immediately, according to his last will, to **mo, as soon as they were sure of his being dead ; for he desired to rest near the remains of his friends.— I hope this is true, and that he was not sacrificed to malice ! The sudden removal of the corpse certainly makes this somewhat probable. I was in the Prince's room when father Sebastian came with

a sealed parcel. "Here is something for you from our deceased friend; perhaps it contains his last will, which he trusts to your care. I saw it in his writing desk, before they found him dead. The direction struck me; and the addition upon it, to deliver it to you immediately after his death, may excuse this sudden step which I have taken,—for having brought it to you without the knowledge of any other person." Tears almost made the words of Sebastian unintelligible. Oh! I certainly have wronged him; for he seriously bewails the death of the Bishop!—But it may be dissimulation.

The Prince thanked him. He opened the parcel immediately, and ran over its contents hastily, which seemed to make a deep impression upon him. He communicated nothing to the priest, but locked himself up in his room, as soon as he was gone. I could not learn any thing about it; but I feel so much interested in it, that I shall not think it dishonourable to open the writing desk of the Prince, as soon as an opportunity offers. Perhaps we may obtain a key to many other things. I shall, in this instance, make some extracts, by which means you will be able to judge for yourself. I wished long ago to do so, but found no opportunity.

The parcel must contain intelligence of great consequence. The Prince is still engaged in perusing it, and has given orders for us to suffer no person to enter his room. His countenance is very serious and gloomy; his eyes seem to express astonishment and rage; his sorrows, which the death of the Bishop had occasioned, appear to be forgotten. My curiosity is raised to the highest pitch, and I can scarcely wait for the best time to satisfy myself and you.

The same to the same.

December 9th.

Arm yourself, friend, to hear things which will astonish you. My conjectures have not deceived me. The parcel contains things of the greatest consequence. The whole of last night I spent in reading it through, at the greatest hazard of being discovered. The Prince does not go out so generally as he did, but receives his visitors in his hotel.

And, if that did not happen, I was prevented by other circumstances from pursuing my plan. Last night he went to bed very early, and I ventured to creep into his room although some of his people sleep under it. With the greatest care I opened the writing-desk, and took out the parcel. The contents I here communicate to you.

“ PRINCE !

“ My death unravels a history which I was obliged to conceal from you, during my lifetime, to continue unknown. It was my only wish to live in obscurity, for I could not expect ever to obtain the sovereignty : listen then to my history from the beginning to the end.

“ I am a —— Prince, and the eldest brother of the present regent —— . I would not discover myself to you, fearful that I might inflame you to unseasonable revenge, and by that means deprive myself of my quietude. As soon as my duty called me to your assistance, my heart willingly accorded with the invitation ; and it cost me a desperate struggle to obtain that fortitude which was required, not to press you, my nephew, immediately to my heart ; and, I am confident, you must have perceived my embarrassment at our first interview, which arose from the same cause. I thought it prudent to act thus, as I wished to go down in peace to my grave ; because I was not sure that in discovering myself to you, you might, perhaps, have unintentionally betrayed me. The following history will convince you that I am your near relation.

“ I was heir to the crown, and of my three other brothers there remains only the present —— and your uncle. Your father is no more ; he was the dearest to me, and I shall probably meet him again in a better world, after a long separation. Between me and the present —— there existed, from our infancy, a rooted dislike to each other, which originated from our being such opposite characters. As he advanced in years his enmity became worse ; for he easily perceived that I was superior to him in rank, and that the crown was my inheritance. His ambition made the first intolerable to him ; and, in the last, he was actuated by the impolitic desire of an absolute authority. He sought as much as possible to avoid my society, and treated me

with that ceremony which is invented and practised only by those who regard not the tender ties of relationship. He never called me brother ; and the more I endeavoured to win his affection by my good conduct, the more he absented himself from me. Nature had endowed me with superior talents, which caused my parents, and the other parts of the family, to love me sincerely, and which increased his hatred. On the contrary, your father was so much the more attached to me ; and God grant that you may enjoy that happiness which his brotherly love gave me ! My father was very feeble, and gradually declined in his health. He had a great desire to see me married in his life, to witness, perhaps, an offspring. How was it possible for me not to fulfil the will of a father, who only entreated where he could have commanded ? The convention pointed out to me a spouse from the —d— house ; and it was a pleasant circumstance to me that I had three sisters to choose from. I did not hesitate which to accept. I pitched upon Amelia, who, although not so beautiful as her sisters, yet far surpassed them in liveliness and temper. Though my hairs have long been whitened by age, yet whilst I write this I shed tears of joy, sacred to the day when she swore eternal love to me at the altar. When the ceremony was concluded I conducted my spouse, as the hereditary princess, to my father's house. She loved me not as a royal consort, to whom the homage of a court was due, but one whom she could press tenderly to her heart as her husband and friend. I was the happiest man in the world ; I seldom quitted the society of my Amelia ; she was all to me. Such perfect domestic happiness as we enjoyed few princes can boast of. Our mutual love and happiness was every where spoken of with veneration. Before a year was elapsed, she was brought to bed of a boy, and the country celebrated this event with great splendour. She nourished him at her breast, and delighted to see him walk in leading strings. It was firmly resolved not to trust the child in the hands of hirelings, but to educate him ourselves.

“ Alas ! my happiness was too great to last long. I was soon dashed from its pinnacle. My father engaged in the war which broke out with the enemies of his allies, the

—d—. My duty called me into the field. The love I bore your father, who had already suffered much from the enemy, overcame the anxieties of my beloved spouse. She dismissed me with fortitude, without a tear; yet she could not conceal the emotions of her soul when she thought we might never meet again. Her last prayer was for my safety. —I mounted my horse. The sound of drums and trumpets chased every weak sensation from my mind, and, courageously, I led my soldiers to the field of battle. They were all well disciplined, and I had their confidence and love: what could I hope otherwise than to return home victorious? — My first plans succeeded. From two battles I returned a conqueror, and the enemy began already to fear my superiority. One effort more was to be made upon the fortress of —, and which, if I succeeded in taking, all would be completed. The evening before the battle I encouraged my soldiers, and all swore either to be victorious or to die. At the break of day we marched to meet the enemy, and formed a line of battle in a place well situated for the purpose. My men fought like lions, and the enemy behaved with equal gallantry. They were well aware how much they were interested in the event; and victory remained long undecided.

“ At last it proved in favour of us. The enemy began to yield, and I commanded the heavy cavalry to charge sword in hand. I headed my people, which inflamed them with new courage. A ball, which struck me upon my head, caused me to fall from my horse; and four months I lingered without my senses. When I came to myself, I found that I was in the hands of my enemies. They had discovered me naked upon the field of battle; and, when they saw signs of life in me, I was carried with the wounded to the hospital. The contusion in my head was very dangerous; they were obliged to trepan me; and, after the accounts which they gave me, as to the manner that they proceeded, it is almost incredible how I escaped with my life. Alas! better had it been that I had died; for the sorrows which I was doomed to suffer were almost too much for me to bear, and I am not able to comprehend how I survived them. My first enquiries were after my

father and my wife : alas ! oh God ! what did I hear ? As soon as I fell from my horse the courage of my men failed them ; and the enemy, taking advantage of their confusion, made a fierce attack, and gained with ease a complete victory.

“ This unhappy news caused my father’s death, and my wife soon followed him. My little son also died a few weeks after. My brother had usurped the reins of government in the name of my child, who was not old enough ; and he was proclaimed regent of —— with the greatest splendour. What I felt by this information no words can express. I had lost all ! I thought it not proper to make myself known ; and, when I was entirely restored, they dismissed me without ransom, and many of the officers there made me rich presents. I would not venture to wait upon my brother, though he seemed to me very friendly during the war, in which he also had assisted. It was as if a secret power destined me for destruction. How could I be an agreeable guest, as my existence must necessarily deprive him of the crown ; and I could not expect any mercy from him in that case, as he always hated me ; and the love which he showed me during the campaign displayed only his hypocrisy, as I could easily perceive. I went to my father-in-law ; but I was a long time before I could speak to him, for, in my dress, they would not suffer me to approach him, and I was not willing to discover myself to any body but to him. At last I succeeded in obtaining a hearing, whilst he was walking to his carriage at a country seat, for which opportunity I was obliged to wait for more than four hours ; but the issue of it was not what I expected. Illness and sorrow had quite disfigured me : he thought me an impostor ; and I ought to thank God that I was not dragged to a dungeon. I mentioned to him every trifling circumstance, even when I courted his daughter ; but it was of no use. The clearest proof to the contrary was, that they had found my corpse upon the field of battle ; that my wife and brothers had acknowledged it to be such, and that it was buried in the vault of my ancestors, and that they still mourned my death.

“ To recover my lost crown seemed to me impossible.

My second brother, on whom I rested my hopes, was upon his travels. I made myself easy in my situation, and thought it infinitely better to do so, than to try to ascend the throne by the blood of my fellow-creatures, even if it were possible for me to find a power to assist me; since success in the attempt would not have been any recompense to me for that which I had lost. I bought with the money that I was possessed of a guitar; entirely reconciled myself to my fate; and, without having any plan for the future, I travelled from place to place, and earned my bread at the doors of wealthy people. This manner of life perfectly agreed with my situation; for, as every thing in the world had become indifferent to me, I found it welcome to me. I happened one day to pass through a village on the borders of ——. As it began to grow dark when I arrived, I resolved to pass the night there. It was on a Sunday; and I was entreated by the guests of the alehouse to entertain them with my guitar. I began, and sang a romance which I had composed myself from my own history, but which could not easily be discovered, because it treated of a Prince who was in the power of malevolent fairies. I used to sing it better than any other, for it was my favourite song, as my sensations could be more strongly expressed by it, and without betraying myself; for who would have suspected in my person the hereditary Prince of ———, whom they concluded was no more? I felt a particular sorrow so long as I travelled in my native country, when the bells rang for my death*, and which had already announced that my Amelia was no more: alas! could I but have recovered her again, how willingly would I have renounced all claims to the diadem and purple robes.

“The tolling of bells brought her loss fresh to my mind, and it was as if my heart was severed by a two-edged sword. I was attentive to my guitar, and saw not what was going forwards about me. I had finished. The country people were all sitting round me, and almost lost in attention and astonishment. The landlord, an invalid, with a wooden leg, stood before me in his soldier’s dress,

* It is a custom in Germany, whenever a prince dies, to ring the passing-bell every evening for a certain period.

and surveyed me narrowly ; I thought his countenance was familiar to me. ‘ Fetch the best that you have in your house, mother,’ he exclaimed, ‘ and put it before the guitar-man.’ — He came nearer to me, and said ; ‘ Perhaps you do not know what a happy day this is to me ; your song is a faithful representation of the fate of our hereditary Prince.’ He took off his cap. I became anxious. ‘ I served under him, and was in the same engagement, when he lost his life and I my leg. I would willingly have died in his stead ! The rascal who shot him ! — but we dare not speak what we know ; if he was alive, it would be better for our country.’ ‘ Yes,’ said the countryman, and praised me so much that I was scarcely able to maintain my character. ‘ You see,’ said the landlord, ‘ that I am clothed in my regimentals ! It is my birth-day, and it is then only, and on great festivals, that I put them on. Let us be merry ! Indeed it would be better for us, if our happy hereditary Prince was living ! I have many times stood near to him, and have conversed with him.’

“ He wiped a tear from his eye, and I was obliged to turn from him. I knew but too well who the landlord was. He had served in the guard, and was very well known to me. — ‘ You should have seen him,’ he continued. ‘ If I described him to you, I should say he looked exactly like this guitar-man, only he was handsomer ; his height was the same. We ought not to make such a comparison ; but an hereditary Prince is made of the same materials as a guitar-man, and the difference consists only in this, that the Almighty gave the one a sceptre, and the other a guitar.’ — He once more looked at me. ‘ Yes, exactly his features ! He appeared so the moment I saw him.’ He took a full bumper. — ‘ To the memory of our hereditary Prince !’ he exclaimed — and all followed his example. I was anxious not to be known, and began immediately to play a lively tune, to turn the attention of the people to another object. I succeeded, but not with the wish of the landlord ; he remained thoughtful. The countrymen at last dispersed, and the landlord took me aside. He spoke to me bare-headed.

‘ You are our Prince. I know you well !’ I affected to laugh, and answered, ‘ He is dead ; you yourself said so. ‘ I said so, but I thought otherwise. No one will suppose that I am in possession of a secret, which is known to very few. You may tell me who you are. Do not think that I will betray you. I had an idea that you might still be alive ; and as I read in the newspapers that, at — d —, somebody had given himself out to be the hereditary Prince of —, I became more sure of it ; and, when I saw you, I knew you so well that I was confident I was not mistaken. Speech and every thing else agree. Our Prince played also upon the guitar, and sung well. I have many times listened to his music, when I stood sentinel before his tent, in the last campaign ; and I crept very often behind his tent to hear him play. However, it never would have come into my mind to seek in your person the Prince, did not I know what I do, and had not your conduct betrayed you ; as I told the countrymen, that between you and the hereditary Prince there was the greatest similarity.’ He seized my hand with affection. ‘ Oh ! let me hear it from your own mouth, although I am confident that you are our hereditary Prince !’

“ I could no longer maintain my disguise. I discovered myself to him. His prudent conduct in the presence of the countrymen, when he knew me, was a sufficient proof of his integrity ; and from him I learned things which made my hair stand upright, and taught me to avoid in future, more carefully, my native country. ‘ Do you know,’ continued he, ‘ from whom the ball came that dismounted you ? From one of your own soldiers. When you fell, another ball also killed my comrade ; and I, at the same time, lost my leg. I fell near him. I was lying there in the most excruciating pain. When the tumult of the battle ceased, his piercing shrieks brought me to my senses ; and I had power and sense enough left to bind up my wound as well as I possibly could. He now perceived that I was still alive. *Kill me brother ; do me that favour !* he exclaimed — *No, do not kill me ; I am not worthy of such mercy ! I deserve the dreadful torments I endure — for I have murdered our hereditary Prince ! The cursed*

money of his Highness's brother tempted me to commit that horrid deed. Now hell drags me down ! He died uttering the most frightful curses.'

" So much deliberate villany I did not expect from my brother ; but I experienced pangs still more terrible. — As they could not find my body upon the field of battle, they took from the spot that of another person who resembled me, and, by disfiguring his face, produced it as my corpse. But my inhuman brother was not yet satisfied. He poisoned my spouse and little son ; and I will not presume to say with certainty, that he did not send out of the world, by that means, my father. God will judge him — I leave it to his conscience. — I remained at the house of the invalid several days, and obliged him to promise me eternal silence as to what he knew, and continued my journey. At J—— I was taken ill with a bad fever ; and I found a home in the convent ——, where they took great care of me.

" One day I was laying almost exhausted after a fit, when, raising my eyes, I saw a monk sitting upon my bed, who seemed to take particular care of me. I looked at him, and beheld Father Lorenzo, who was formerly in the convent ——, which I visited very often, on account of its romantic situation, and his society, which I preferred to that of all the other priests. The good monk knew me immediately ; and, as he feared I might betray myself during the delirium, he had taken the trouble to watch me himself. I commended his precaution, and thanked God that he had sent me a friend at so critical a period, to whom I could intrust the secret of my misfortunes. From that time the monk Lorenzo was my constant companion. At last I recovered, and felt an unconquerable desire to remain in the convent. I had already got acquainted with many good friends there, and I could not bear to separate from them ; I was also tired of wandering about. ' Is it possible,' I exclaimed, ' to choose a more noble way of living than that of studying the welfare of men ? ' And now my resolution was firm to enter as one of their order. I was obliged to become a Roman Catholic ; but who can blame me for that ? Does not God

know the heart? And where can we find amongst the supporters of our religion such conduct as amongst the Catholics? They are blamed for intolerance.—Do they enquire what we believe before they do a good action? Never! They give to him who wants without respect or preference. Where is there a doctrine which is taught by the Catholic church, which does not agree with the purest principles of morality?—That monks sometimes abuse their faith must not be denied, and this cannot often be said of the Protestants. However, I will not defend a step that my conscience never reproached me for, and for which I never was sorry, but always found it beneficial to me. I expect the approaching hour when my Creator will call me to an account for all my actions, and I do not tremble at it. He will not ask, What didst thou believe? But, How didst thou act? And what religion is most desired by good monks? Is it not that which I have embraced?

“ I spent a number of happy years in that convent—I care not what is said against the monks. I found this opinion confirmed, namely, that an unhappy being cannot choose a better refuge from his misfortunes than the tranquil scenes of a cloister. I never should have left it, if I had not been obliged to do so by necessity. Heaven knows that my brother found out the place of my retirement. Father Lorenzo discovered a monk in our convent who aimed at my life; and he confessed that he was hired to do so by one of my brother’s officers. To prevent the execution of the diabolical design, I left the convent; and my separation cost me many tears.—I travelled over * z —. An account that I was still alive had also spread there, and made me particularly anxious for fear I should be discovered. The discovery happened. But it was made by a friend, who became my support in that trying hour—this was the governor of —, who was some time in the service of our court. By his intercession I obtained the bishopric of —; and, much as I struggled against it, I was obliged to accept it.

“ But in that situation I was not safe from the revenge of my brother; and he trusted me less, as I was in a better situation to do him material injury than when I lived an

harmless monk in the convent of ———. Some narrow escapes made me anxious, and at last obliged me to take up my abode here ; and I found in the Doge of ——— a great protector. By his influence I also obtained permission to preach at St. Mark's church, which suited my wishes and inclinations. I had many enemies amongst the clergy in this place, because I did not always follow their example ; but I suffered all very patiently, and thanked God that this was not owing to the ill will of my brother, whom I was willing not to curse in my heart. With the relation of my misfortunes I could fill a folio volume ; but this is enough, my son, to instruct you in my history, and to procure me after my death a tear from my nearest relation. A certain presumption tells me I shall not live long, and in that case I recommend to you the priest Sebastian. You may safely follow his advice, for I have tried him and found him sincere. Let him finish the work of your conversion, which I have begun. He is wise and unblemished in word and deed. My blessing attend you in every undertaking. Farewell.

“ L. R——, formerly
“ Hereditary Prince of ——.”

Well, friend, what do you say to this? The history itself appears to me false. I cannot help suspecting that it leads to the execution of a certain scheme. It is very true that the deceased Bishop was a German, though no person was acquainted with his real history, and whenever the Prince spoke of it, he turned the conversation to some other subject. Every thing has a romantic air ; and, although I know too well that in the Prince's family there are hidden some secrets which no biographer can disclose, I cannot give credit to the Bishop's history. The Prince is fully convinced of the truth of the whole history. I was present at a conference which he had with Sebastian upon the subject. He thinks the Bishop was his uncle, and that his handwriting proves the fact. “ On that account my grandfather died so suddenly, and the daughter-in-law and nephew followed him ! ” exclaimed he, with a terrible voice, and swore to be revenged upon the assassin.

Sebastian joined with him in his resolution, and made this observation,—that it appeared clear that Heaven had selected him for the holy task of punishing such a horrible crime.

The same to the same.

December.

The good Baron F—— is poisoned, by the command of the Prince. This is the recompense for his faithful attachment.—— Oh God! The Prince is already so far gone, that he suffers his people to be assassinated clandestinely! I have heard it positively asserted that he ordered it to be done; and Biondello was so quick in the execution, that I could not prevent it. They accused the good F—— of having written letters to ——, in which he had calumniated the Prince. The Count O—— also, it was said, was a party concerned. Oh! ye good people! Ye interest yourselves too much for an unworthy man! It is probable that the Baron has written something to —— that the Prince dislikes; but does he deserve to be assassinated for it? It is too common in this country. But ought not the Prince rather to thank him for it? He certainly did it with no other view than that the Prince might leave Venice, and extricate himself from a labyrinth in which he will be more and more entangled. That this man could not have been actuated by bad motives, I will stake my life, and all my hopes of eternal happiness.

Several days later.

And yet, friend, how miserably am I deceived in my opinion of mankind! The Baron F—— and the Count O—— cannot be those honest persons we had supposed them; yet I must say this in their excuse, that they have too much interested themselves in the Prince's welfare. I have been again to the Prince's writing-desk, and seen all the letters from the Baron F—— to the Count O——, and also several of the last, which Biondello probably had intercepted according to his orders. I judge more favourably of the Prince's rash proceedings, yet I will not defend him; for the letters are written in such terms that one would scarcely suspect the greatest villain of being the author, and, what is still more terrible, it appears very clear

from their contents that the Baron F—— poisoned the Prince's Greek lady, by command of the Court. But they should have first heard the Baron in his defence. Perhaps he still may be innocent; for he was very much attached to the Prince, and in all his actions seemed a man of integrity. I can hardly persuade myself that he could be the villain which is required to commit such deeds; — to calumniate his master, and poison an innocent lady, who, according to the description of all that knew her, was an angel. I am perplexed in the extreme! I was prevented writing farther upon this business by a strange event. A man entered my room, and desired, in a very noisy way, to be shown immediately to my master. From his countenance I saw he was desperate; he looked wild and in trouble. I must confess that his appearance alarmed me. At the moment I felt embarrassed; I knew not how to address him. Observing that I hesitated, he repeated his demand once more, with terrible threats. Anxious to know the purport of his visit, I attended the fellow to the Prince. As soon as he saw him, he rushed upon him, and drew a dagger from his bosom, which he presented to the Prince, who quickly retired into a corner of the room, and drawing his sword, held it before the villain. "This dagger was destined for you, Prince!" he exclaimed, gnashing his teeth. The attendants seized the assassin, and disarmed him. "That is unnecessary," said he, struggling to disengage himself: "had I been such an outcast as to have assassinated my gracious master, I should indeed have chosen an hour when no person could have prevented me."

The Prince, who had now recovered himself from his fright, approached him, and discovered him to be his servant, whom he had lost about a year ago. His astonishment was very great to find his man, whom he had despaired of ever seeing again, in such a peculiar situation.

"And you could determine to murder your master? you whom I always looked upon as one of my most faithful servants!" "And I am still so, as God the Almighty is my witness, gracious Prince," he replied; "else this my dagger would have pierced your heart, for it would have

procured me a thousand zechins ; a handsome reward, indeed, for the life of a Prince !” “ Who could offer so much for my life ?” (Laughing furiously.)—“ Your uncle, his Serene Highness.” “ Does he wish to assassinate me also ? He should have chosen some other person to have executed this honourable deed ; for he must have well known that he had not found his man in you ! This was stupidly managed. One villain always supposes another person to be the same.” “ Pardon me, great Prince, for speaking thus openly ; but it is the truth.—And do you think that this is the first attempt that has been made upon your life ? Already seventeen assassins have been hired ; but they never were able to come at you. When they thought that they had you in their power, it always happened that you were snatched from them. They cursed their fortune, and said, that the fault was not theirs ; that a person (I do not know what they call him, and who always goes about in different disguises), had prevented the execution of their design, because he took you under his protection.”

“ Ah ! the Armenian !” said the Prince, astonished.

“ They would not leave this work any longer to the care of the banditti, but chose me for the purpose. I thanked them for this honourable trust. I was ordered to return again to your secretary, to say that I had been detained in the cloister by the monks, to regain your confidence, and then to assassinate you privately when you expected no danger, and were alone and unarmed. On the deed being done, I was to fly to the convent, and to be received under its protection.” “ Stupid scheme ; pity that it was not more successful : but where have you been all this time ?” “ I have not been out of Venice, but have been shut up in a small room, where I could neither see sun nor moon.” “ But how could you receive messages from me ?” “ In the easiest way in the world, even by means of those people from —, who had taken and confined me. I regularly went to a cloister in the Giudecca, and performed my devotions ; which was very agreeable to me : for the father who governed it did every thing to please me, and had almost succeeded in making me a Catholic. Do not be

angry, great Prince; for he possessed such powers of persuasion, that he obliged me to believe whatever he said. I often reprobated myself for my apostacy; but I changed my mind again as soon as I got to the cloister! He was not, like most Venetians, difficult of access, but, on the contrary, very communicative; and, from the first time that I saw him, I desired so much to see him again, that I sought him of my own accord the day following. Many of the other brethren behaved very civilly to me; and I could not help preferring their agreeable society to any other. There was always something new; and my curiosity was so much excited, that I could with difficulty wait the return of the visit. Their intention was, very likely, to convert me to their faith; for what otherwise could they see in me deserving of so much trouble? And, perhaps, this was not difficult to accomplish; for they represented every thing in so peaceable and lovely a manner, that I really frequented the places of worship with infinite pleasure. They were always curious, and wished to hear news of you, gracious Sir: but when I told them I was ignorant, or that I dared not blab, they were then satisfied, and praised my fidelity. What they might safely know I told them, but not one syllable more; and we remained, by this means, the best friends. One day as I was going to them, after they had been paying a visit, from which they had returned rather late, it was already dusk, and I was not far from the cloister, when three fellows surrounded me, bound my hands and feet, and forced me away blindfolded. They carried me into a small dark room, and left me to myself. I had not been long there, when Colonel ——ch came to me: he endeavoured to extort news of you, which I either did not know, or at least pretended to be ignorant of. He took all possible trouble to get something out of me; and, when fair means did not succeed, had recourse to severity. Your Highness cannot believe what questions they put to me; it was all unintelligible to me. They attributed to you what you never performed; and every step you took, and every thing you did, was misrepresented in the most shameful manner.”

“Had I even then spies about me?” exclaimed the

Prince. "I must confess, this exceeds all my expectations."

"The Colonel ——, and several other officers, who had long practised without effect upon me, and whom I knew very well to have been here a long time in secret, for eight or nine months never came near me, as they well knew that all their threats were in vain. Some days after this time the Colonel paid me another visit. I was tired of living so long upon bread and water, and therefore pretended to be very obedient; and immediately the proposal was made to me of murdering you. I accepted the offer; because I feared they might procure some other person, who would execute this order in earnest. What remains you are already acquainted with."

The Prince took this man again into his service, and gave orders for apprehending the pretended officers. It always appeared wonderful to me that he never could gain any information respecting them. How the Prince was affected by this act of his court, you may easily conceive: he vowed death and destruction to it. It is fortunate that he has it not in his power to execute it; for he would, perhaps, keep his word: but it is otherwise ordered. Indeed, it is natural to expect that he who permitted Count F—— to be murdered without a hearing, would easily consent to having his uncle privately assassinated: he might even think he had a right to do it, as a just revenge, and consider it as a praiseworthy action. And although he was never influenced by secret revenge, his passions here interfered; and it appears to me as if he only opposed them to become the more furious. It might also happen that the assistance he expected from the King of —— could not be granted.

Surprise upon surprise! This instant the Prince has learned that the Bishop of —— has been taken off by poison, and at the instigation of the Count ——. The perpetrators of this deed have been taken, and confessed every thing. The Prince himself has spoken to them, and every thing has been again confirmed. This is too bad; and, were it possible to suspect a trick, I should be apt to think (as every thing seems to accord with the idea), that it had

been done on purpose to inflame the rage of the Prince against ——. But who could be interested in this? The whole is to me unaccountable. If the anger of the Prince could have been increased, it would certainly have been so by this intelligence; but it was already at the highest. For a long time he spoke not a word, but his breast boiled with rage. “Murderers of my relations and my friends!” at last he exclaimed, with furious action; “God’s dreadful vengeance shall at last fall upon you, through me, and then woe to you!”

I hope it will be forgotten by him, for the most violent passions always last the shortest time; but, so soon as we perceive he is about undertaking any dangerous business, we must then have recourse to the last extremity, and lay the whole affair before ——: for it appears to me, in spite of all the improbabilities by which it is attended, nothing more than a concerted trick. And may not this be attributed to the old man that I overheard talking to Biondello? and does it not appear to be agreeable to his whole plan? I do not know myself what to think of it. Will it be impossible for you to find out these officers? Perhaps they would be able to give you information upon many things!

A day later.

The Armenian is at work again; Sebastian came to the Prince to-day earlier than usual. His countenance announced something remarkable: he approached the Prince silently, and gave him the following note:—

“PRINCE,

“I have always recommended to you patience and submission. If you are desirous of acquiring my nearer acquaintance, or if you wish to arrive at that pinnacle of power which you can attain through me, I now require a proof of both. I am not a stranger to the resolution you have taken, to be revenged. You must no longer indulge the thought, or, at least, not upon any account execute it. It will be a proof of your prudence and patience. Mark this,—that often is a crime which, at another time and under different circumstances, may be an act of justice.

You will convince me of your sincerity, if, before the end of seven days, you become a member of the only true and happy church. I know this has been long your intention; but proceed to fulfil it. The reasons for your doing this I cannot now explain; but they will in time unfold themselves.

“ Your invisible conductor

“ Through all places.”

“ From the Armenian !” exclaimed the Prince, after he had read the letter, with attention and a kind of awe: “ how did you know him ?” “ He appeared to me in my apartment, and gave me the letter ; more I know not,” said Sebastian; at the same time putting his finger upon his mouth, as if he would say, “ This business ought not to be spoken of.” The Prince understood him, and was silent. Here again, then, the Armenian has been before us; but this time I am disposed to thank him, although the circumstance proved to me that I was mistaken: for now there can be no longer any doubt, but that the Armenian and his associates were innocent of having poisoned the Prince’s friends; for he surely would not thus destroy the effect of his own work.

The Baron F—— is frequently confined to his bed; nevertheless, he now and then creeps about; but death seems to be painted in his countenance. The Prince appears to be a little concerned for him. I observed this in him, and was very happy, because it showed that he had still some regard for him. But he will not consent to an interview, although he seems to be convinced that he has condemned him too rashly. Poor F——! Alas! if he is innocent, the conduct of the Prince towards him will give him even more pain than the poison itself; and I really conclude, from his former character, that he is so. But then certainly the letters —— It is wonderful that I never could believe any person guilty, that I had not before suspected to be capable of committing a crime; and I could not judge the Baron to be such a villain, although I had seen those letters in his own handwriting. For appearance’s sake, the Prince had granted him a physician, in order to conceal the real cause of his illness; but I am afraid this

man only makes his case worse : for the Baron, since his attendance, has had many painful paroxysms, which is contrary to the usual effect produced by this poison, which almost imperceptibly consumes the vital powers.

Narrative of the Count O—— resumed.

The remaining letters from Johnson were destroyed, for Lord Seymour carelessly left a wax candle burning upon the table when he went to bed, which, when it had burnt out, set the letters on fire ; by which means the good lord would have lost his life, if the smoke in consequence of it had not waked him in time. The remaining part of this history I must therefore relate from his recollection of the contents of the letters.

Lord Seymour's Statement.

The epistle from the Armenian had its effect ; or rather the Prince had long ago formed the same resolution, from the instigation of Sebastian and the other monks, and this letter hastened its execution. He went over publicly to the Roman church before the expiration of seven days ; and all Venice celebrated the day as a great feast. That it was possible for this event to happen, and that he might have come into the measure willingly, might easily have been expected from his education, which I observed long before was very bigoted, and slavish ; and when we take into the account what happened to him afterwards, and which served so completely to eradicate from his youthful heart the impressions that had been so strongly engraven upon it, we shall conclude the old man had rightly judged, when he said that the Prince could not possibly retain his original opinions after being convinced of their inefficacy, and that he would eagerly catch at a reed to save himself from sinking. The Prince's confession of faith, which he made in the presence of many people, and which, by means of Johnson, came into my possession, I can by no means suppress, because I have made it a fixed rule to relate every thing that concerns the Prince, and in no particular to deviate from the truth ; which would be the case, in my opinion, if any thing should be suppressed which

tends to characterise him : but I must previously observe, that the Prince by it will lose much in the estimation of many; who will be surprised that he, who was so favoured by nature, could consent to acknowledge such nonsense, the greater part of which is contrary to all sound reason, and every moral principle. But I have before said that he fell ; and my tears compassionate, at the same time that my heart excuses him, because a more than devilish cunning and art had spread the net in which he was ensnared !

The Prince's Confession of Faith, verbatim.

I believe and confess, that, through the peculiar care of this Christian government, and the active industry and assistance of the holy fathers, I have been entirely brought over from my heretical life and faith, to the true Roman Catholic religion, and only church in which can be obtained salvation ; and I do publicly declare to the whole world that I received this faith freely, and without any compulsion.

1. I confess and believe the Pope is Christ's vicar, and has full power to forgive the sins of all men, according to his own pleasure, to save them, or to thrust them into hell, or excommunicate them.

2. I confess that the Pope is the supreme head of the church, and that he cannot err.

3. I confess that whatever novelty the Pope establishes (whether it be or not in the Scriptures), whatever he ordains is the genuine truth, divine, and blessed ; and that every inferior person should esteem the same as equal to the commandments of God.

4. I do confess that the most holy Pope should be adored by every one with divine honours, and that every one should bow the knee to him as to Christ himself.

5. I declare, and confess, that the Pope should be honoured by all, in all things, as a most holy father ; and, moreover, that those heretics who live contrary to his ordinances, should not only be exterminated by fire and sword, without exception or mercy, but also that their bodies and souls should be delivered up to hell.

6. I confess that the reading of the Holy Scriptures is the source of all sects and parties, as also perfect blasphemy.

7. I confess, that to invoke the deceased saints, to worship the holy fathers, to bow the knee before them, to make pilgrimages to their tombs, to clothe them, to burn lights before them, is godly, holy, and useful.

8. I confess that a much greater than the mother of God Mary is, who once bore the Lord Christ, and never conceived again; but a Romish priest offers and forms the Lord Christ, not as often as he is willing, but in any manner he will; yea, he feeds upon him while he chews the bread.

9. I confess that it is proper to read masses, to give alms, and to pray for the dead.

10. I confess that the Pope of Rome has power to alter the scripture, and to augment and to diminish it according to his own pleasure.

11. I confess that the soul will be purified in purgatory after death, and that its deliverance from thence is partly effected by the sacrifice of the mass offered up by the priest.

12. I acknowledge that to receive the holy eucharist in one kind is good and salutary; but to receive it in both kinds is heretical and damnable.

13. I acknowledge that those who receive the holy communion in one kind, enjoy and eat the whole Christ, both body and blood; and also his godhead and his bones.

14. I acknowledge that there are seven true and effectual sacraments.

15. I acknowledge that God is honoured by representations of him, and may by means of them be known of men.

16. I acknowledge that the holy Virgin Mary is queen of heaven, and governs together with the Son, and that according to her will the Son is obliged to act in all things.

17. I acknowledge that the holy Virgin Mary should be esteemed, both by men and angels, higher than Christ, the Son of God himself.

18. I acknowledge that the bones of the saints are pos-

sessed of great virtues, on which account they ought to be honoured by men, and have chapels built for them.

19. I acknowledge that the Roman Catholic faith is unadulterated, godly, saving, and true ; but that the Protestant, which I of my own accord have abjured, is false, erroneous, blasphemous, accursed, heretical, hurtful, seditious, abominable, forged, and devised. Since the Roman Catholic religion is, therefore, throughout good and salutary, I curse all those who taught me these abominable heresies in both kinds ; I curse my parents who educated me in the heretical faith ; and I also curse those who made the Roman Catholic faith dubious and suspicious to me ; as also those who gave me to drink of the accursed cup ; yes, I curse myself, and think myself accursed, because I made myself a partaker of this accursed heretical cup, of which it did not become me to drink.

20. I acknowledge that the Holy Scripture is imperfect, and is a dead letter, as long as it is not explained by the Pope of Rome, and that the common people ought not to be allowed to read it.

21. I acknowledge that a requiem sung by a Romish priest is more useful than a hundred sermons ; and on that account I curse all those books which I have read in which that heretical and blasphemous doctrine is contained ; I also curse all the works which I read whilst I lived in this heretical faith ; wherefore they at the last judgment will not deserve any thing of God.*

All this I do with my sincere mind confirm, by means of a public retractation of the heretical doctrine, in the presence of the reverend fathers, the learned gentlemen, and the ladies who are present, and the youths and virgins, that the Roman Catholic church in these and similar articles is the true one. Moreover I promise that I will never more, through my whole life, return to this heretical doctrine of the sacrament in both kinds, although it should be allowable to do so. I also promise, that as long as I have a drop of blood in my body, I will not educate any child of mine, in case I should have any, in that accursed doc-

* What the meaning of this is I know not. Perhaps, " something for which God will not reward me."—GERMAN EDITOR.

trine, nor will consent that it should be educated therein by others; which I herewith promise. I also swear that I will help to persecute this accursed heretical doctrine, secretly and openly, with words and works, the sword even not excepted. Lastly, I swear before God, the angels, and before all the congregation present, that if any alteration should take place, either in church or state, I never will become an apostate from the Roman Catholic and godly church, either from fear or favour, and return again to this accursed heresy; nor will I receive the same.

As a confirmation of my oath, I at the same time receive the holy communion; and I cause also this my confession, written and subscribed with my own hand, to be preserved in the holy archives of the church.*

N. N., PRINCE OF —.

To this was also added the following advertisement: —

“To all and every one who see, read, or hear the annexed letter, we declare and testify, that the most illustrious Prince, his highness N. N. Prince of —, has this day, namely, the — day of the month of December, 17—, been absolved from all sin and heresy, by the papal power delivered to us, having before renounced the Lutheran religion, condemned by the council of Trent, and has publicly made his confession, and adopted the Roman Catholic and only beatifying religion; he hath likewise received from our hands the holy communion, after the manner and form prescribed by the Roman Catholic church, with a proper veneration and devotion. For the greater security we have signed this with our own hand.

“Given on the —th day of the year mentioned above.

“N. N., BISHOP OF —,

“AND, &c. &c.”

The Prince was now a Roman Catholic; and from that day the Armenian was more frequently seen with him than ever. Their interviews grew more frequent, and lasted sometimes for many hours. They were very rarely held

* The reader who is unacquainted with the Popish religion, will think many things in this confession too highly coloured. But let him believe me, when I most solemnly declare, that I copied the whole verbatim from the manuscript, and that I have not made the smallest addition or alteration.

at the Prince's house, and when they were, the doors were always carefully fastened, and no person allowed to be present. This circumstance, together with their always choosing the most secret rooms in the house for those interviews, by which means they prevented all listening, made it utterly impossible for the worthy Johnson to discover the purpose of these secret meetings. The Prince even carried the key of that room in his pocket, and very often sealed up the door. This, together with Johnson's having sometimes heard an extraordinary noise there, made him conjecture that they must be employed in raising ghosts; which was really the case, as will be confirmed by the conclusion. How great an ascendancy this Armenian must have had over the Prince, is evident from the circumstance, that without his permission he did not even indulge the most sacred feelings of parental affection, or any which were once most dear to him. He had, for example, a mother still living, who resided upon a small estate [at —sh, and whom he formerly loved dearly, and used very frequently to correspond with. He would not answer a letter from her, notwithstanding the bigoted spirit which was prevalent throughout it (and which, as I said before, was peculiar to his whole family), contained such striking marks of maternal anxiety and affection, that no one can read it without being affected by it. Hitherto there was no opportunity for mentioning his mother; and as this letter is also the surest proof of what I have already said of the Prince's education, and is in my possession, I will insert it here.*

“MY SON!

“If thou † couldst know the sorrow which I feel, on account of the afflicting news of thy unhappy apostacy from the true religion and knowledge of God for thy salvation, I do not doubt that (in case thou hadst not

* The reader must not expect to see a letter which might serve as a model for the epistolary style.

The Count O—— has taken care to prevent any thing of that kind, by the note at the end of it; and probably no one will blame me for not having given it a more fashionable dress, because it would then have appeared like a picture of one of our ancestors, drawn in the modern style, in which no one would be able to recognise him. — NOTE BY THE EDITOR.

† In Germany, parents always make use of *thou* and *thee* when addressing their children. — TRANSLATOR.

abjured thy ever faithful mother, as well as thy true God), thy dutiful heart would break on reflecting on the numerous tears thou hast cost me. Oh, son of affliction to me! My tears are still my food, both day and night, whilst I, poor mother, must lament and bewail thy loss, not of earthly goods, but of thy eternal happiness, the condemnation of thy miserable soul. I weep with Rachel for my child, and will not be comforted, because it seemeth to me that he is not.

“ But if all obedience to the fifth commandment, if all filial affection towards thy mother be not extinguished, by the erroneous doctrines which thou hast adopted— Ah! only listen to me, while I address thee, my son, in this letter full of tears!— Oh son whom I nourished! attend to me, that God may also attend to thee. I am thy mother, my son; thou art flesh of my flesh. From me thou hast experienced, as thy conscience must tell thee, all the maternal affection which I promised to thee; and I must certainly seek and desire thy welfare, particularly in things which concern the eternal happiness and salvation of thy soul, which is the most important concern of Christians. Accursed be the mother who, either from a blind opinion, inconsiderate temerity, or the consideration of temporal advantages, would counsel her child to walk the path which leads to eternal destruction, and the hellish abyss of brimstone. Woe to such a mother!— She might, with perfect justice, be hated (according to the command of Christ, Luke, xv. 26.), and never obeyed by any child.

“ My conscience clears me from the suspicion of such a terrible conduct; and my heart gives testimony that I am anxious to snatch my child from the claws of Satan, and lead him to my bleeding Jesus. And, moreover, thy mother entreats thee, dear son, to listen attentively to her, who is now throwing herself at thy feet with thousands of tears, and not to neglect the care which thou shouldst take of thy eternal welfare. Do not despise me, my child, on account of the insinuations of thy seducers, that I am a weak woman, who is not able to judge of controversial points in religion. Thou knowest well, my dear child, that the infinite grace of God has caused me to embrace a religion in which women are allowed, according to the

custom of the primitive church, to enquire into the Holy Scriptures, and to seek for eternal life; and even are obliged to learn the mysteries of the faith, in order to gain everlasting salvation: for which faith St. Paul, in 2 Tim. i. 5., commends Lois and Eunice, the excellent mothers of the holy Timothy. Every just person, whether male or female, ought to live according to his faith. This I have always kept in my mind, and made the word of God the joy and desire of my heart. Thy own conscience will convince thee that, according to the true and infallible word of God, I have formed my judgment of thy new doctrine. Upon that word, against which even the gates of hell shall not prevail, is my judgment founded, and to that does it appeal; and I declare with a broken heart, O thou unhappiest of men! that thou hast suffered thyself to be seduced to a faith which will yield thee nothing but condemnation and the torments of hell. Our divines have already proved this on much more solid grounds, with much greater accuracy, and more fully. I am contented with such evidences as my Christian soul can learn from its Bible.

“Can that be the true and saving religion which shuns the holy Bible, although that book is the only one in which we can learn the way to eternal salvation (John, xx. 31.); which violently condemns the Bible as its decided enemy, and submits not in any thing to its authority, that its fallaciousness and deceptions may not be discovered by it; a religion which condemns the book which Jesus commanded all men to read (John, v. 39.), and forbids them to search into it, under the penalty of an eternal curse? — Oh, accursed doctrine! The word which they have despised shall judge them at the last day, according to the sentence pronounced by Christ. (John, xii. 48.)

“Can that be a holy and blessed doctrine which disregards the only Mediator of our everlasting happiness? Must thou not confess this thyself, my poor misled child? Confess to me what thy eyes have seen, and thy ears have heard. What becomes of the cup in receiving the holy communion, which our dying Jesus has so earnestly ordained and appointed? — Do not they scornfully deride

that institution? — Do they not snatch it from the hands of the communicants, and consider it as perfectly unnecessary, in contempt of Jesus? It appears to me that the Holy Ghost has already pronounced judgment upon those doctrines! Whosoever shall take away from the words of the book of Jesus, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city. (Rev. xxii. 19.)

“Hast thou not heard, that man must have lost his salvation, notwithstanding his good works? wherefore the anguish and blood of the tortured Jesus have been mightily slandered, as if they were not fully sufficient for the salvation of men: but my religion assures me, that we can be saved by the blood of Jesus alone (Acts, iv. 12.), and that they who hope to save themselves by their works will receive eternal damnation. Can that be a holy and blessed doctrine which incites her children to encourage an unlimited idolatry, the invocation of saints, prostrations before pictures, when it is the evident declaration of God himself, that idolaters shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone, which is the second death? (Rev. xxi. 8.)

“Behold, wretched child! — For I must conclude, and pass over other atrocious errors in silence; because my tears prevent me from writing. — Thou hast assented, alas! to such accursed doctrines, whose end is condemnation; and such are the chains of hell with which the Popish faith enslaves thee! Ah! dear child, as the Bible is dear to thee, — as the blood of thy Jesus is dear to thee, — as Jesus himself, who loved thee so ardently, is dear to thee, free thyself from these fetters of the devil, come forth from this Popish darkness, that thou mayest not be infected with its plagues.

“I conjure thee, by thy conscience, to confess to me the truth, and the thoughts of thy heart, which will be hereafter disclosed to my omniscient Jesus. Is it not true, that earthly gain hath enticed thee to adopt this faith? — But despise all such promises; for what good could it do thee, if thou shouldst gain the whole world, and lose thy own soul? Dost thou think the greatest riches could be of use to thee, whilst I am obliged to curse thee on account

of thy wickedness and abjuration of thy God? Dost thou not know that a mother's curse is able to destroy the houses and fortunes of her children? We Protestants have a just God, who, if we put our trust in him, liberally rewards us; who also, when it is proper, will comfort the wretched, and fill the hungry with good things. My maternal heart stands also open to thee, my child, and is ready at any time to receive thee. Have pity then upon thy miserable soul, O thou child of my body! whom I have borne next my heart with great pain, and carefully nourished. Have pity then on thy poor mother, whom thou wilt otherwise bring down to the grave with sorrow, and return again to the evangelic truth, that I may not only live with thee here, but also, with thy blessed forefathers, in eternal happiness with Jesus. On account of which circumstance, I wish that my womb had been thy grave, that I might not behold thee in the gloom of hell! Return, dear child, to God the heavenly father, by the holy and certain declaration of Christ, that He will forgive thee for the heavy crime which thou hast been guilty of, as well as the apostate Peter; and that I, thy hitherto afflicted mother, may then have reason to cry out with joy,—‘For my son was dead, and is alive again.’ (Luke, xv. 24.)

“O blessed day! O joyful hour! that shall announce thy return to me. I will therefore day and night implore the goodness of God, and do not doubt but God will hear my prayer and attend to my earnest tears; for a woman cannot forget her child, so as not to have pity upon the son of her womb. I will not forget thee, my son, in all my prayers, who art in danger of losing thy soul.*

“I remain,

“Thy most sincerely affectionate, but,
on account of thy dreadful apostacy,
thy sighing and bitterly weeping
Mother.”

“—sh, the — 17—.”

* Being very far from approving of many opinions discovered in this letter, I here beg the reader to consider the person who wrote it. He will undoubtedly pardon every harsh expression, when he considers that she laboured under the erroneous idea that no one could be saved who was not of her own persuasion, and that she was obliged to make use of every thing in her power to rescue her son. — NOTE BY COUNT O—.

I must also mention, that a short time before the Prince's conversion to the Roman Catholic religion his uncle died, and that he is now hereditary Prince of —.

Narrative of the Count O—— resumed.

I must now bring the reader once more to that period, when Lord Seymour found me again in his disguise as a showman.

Our common endeavours were made for a long while in vain to learn something more of the Prince than what we had discovered from Johnson's letters, which was but of little benefit, as the source was locked up from whence the information came. In every letter we received from him (for he knew at present of my being with his Lordship, and my intended plan of saving the Prince), he mentioned that the Prince became every day more thoughtful, and lived quite retired from the world. And that, in spite of his endeavours, he could not discover the Armenian's object. That the completion of it was near, we easily guessed, and this made us so much the more anxious ; for he conducted his operations so clandestinely, that nobody could either discover or conjecture his intention. The before-mentioned hieroglyphical letter was now understood by us more clearly than when we first obtained it, as the Prince was now a Roman Catholic, and stood at the foot of the throne ; but the time when the contents of that letter could be fulfilled was necessarily that when he should become Regent of —, which could not be expected so soon. Besides this, we were fearful that all our presentiments were not well founded ; and, though there should be a plan of mischief forming, we could not yet know for a certainty whether the Prince, who ought to be the principal person in it, was willing to consent. This prevented us from taking a step which would inevitably have produced bad consequences for the Prince, and which we agreed to delay until the danger was greater. — This period arrived but too soon.

One evening when it was very late Lord Seymour came to me. His countenance announced something extraordinary. " Friend !" he exclaimed with astonishment,

“I have news to communicate which you never would have imagined! The Prince has found his Greek lady, his Theresa!” “You joke,” I replied. “How is that possible, when she is dead, and Baron F—— himself has seen her dissected? — How is that possible?”

“This question,” he answered, “you must ask the Armenian. In short, she is alive, and every word of the Prince breathes happiness and ecstasy. I saw her come out from the convent — saw how he embraced her, and pressed her to his heart, and heard him in the greatest rapture call her by her name. In short she is alive, and I discovered it by the strangest accident. I was wandering about, and my feet conducted me by the convent ———. The history of the Prince made this convent remarkable to me; and I never went by it without giving a free scope to my sensations. I found the church open, and went into it. A solemn tranquillity surrounded me, and my steps were gently echoed in the vaulted aisles. This little circumstance made a still greater impression upon my imagination; and I found myself so unwell that I could not proceed. A side door, which I never had observed, attracted my eye. I opened it, and discovered a staircase which led into the vaults of the chapel. I went down, and found myself in a spacious cell, surrounded by the dead mouldering in their coffins, and which was dimly illuminated by a lamp that was suspended in the middle of the arch by a chain. Before I could recover my powers of recollection, (for I must confess that, natural as it was to find in such a situation a burial vault, I did not expect it when I stepped down,) I heard behind me the rattling of a door, and the echo of some footsteps which seemed to approach. I was afraid of being discovered, and detained for a thief. I retired into a corner where I could see every thing that passed, without being observed, if they did not search the whole vault, and which I did not fear. I had scarcely stood two minutes in the corner, when the door opened, and in came — the Armenian and the Prince. The first was dressed in a long white robe, thrown loosely over his body: there was a solemn but agreeable dignity, and confidential seriousness, pictured in his face. He took

from under his arm eight torches, and lighted them at the burning lamp. Each of them he moved towards the four walls, and bowed each time. One of them he gave to the Prince, and the other seven he placed around him in a circle. He kneeled in the circle; and then, for a long time, lay speechless and without motion upon his face. At last he arose, and spread out his hands over the burning torches. He drew from out his bosom a bottle in which was a liquid, which he dispersed towards the four corners of heaven, and uttered some words which I could not understand. In the mean time there was heard delightful music, which was at some distance, although it appeared to be near. It seemed to me to be a small organ. However, I must confess that all these unexpected magical arrangements of the Armenian had a great effect upon my mind, and I felt far more than I can describe.

“The Armenian now drew from under his dress a small silver censer, upon which he put something that caused an agreeable odour through the vault. That the whole was intended to raise some spirit, I expected at the first sight; and I was curious to know how he would succeed, as I did not perceive the least apparatus for his purpose. I must confess to you, dear Count, that I had determined, if it were possible, to interrupt the mountebank tricks of this Armenian; and, under that idea, I always carried about me a brace of pocket pistols. But it did not come to that. He put the censer upon the ground, fell again upon his face, and remained in that situation for some minutes. Having risen again, he repeated the same indistinct words which he had uttered before; and, after a pause, stretched his hand towards a new coffin, and let it fall slowly upon it. Suddenly the lid made a rattling noise, and fell to the ground. The Greek Lady instantly appeared. She was wrapped in white burial linen. Inexpressible serenity beamed in her countenance; and there was not the least appearance of her having been ill. The Prince let fall the torch, which till then he had held immovable in his hand, rushed towards her, and clasped her with speechless ecstasy in his arms. I must confess that I was almost petrified by her appearance, and had nearly betrayed myself. This

silent pause lasted for a long time, while the beloved pressed each other to their hearts, and an eager kiss renewed their bonds of attachment. They then uttered, with tender emotion, each other's name, and each said — ' Now thou art mine again for ever !'

" The Armenian remained in his circle of torches, from which he had not removed, and delighted himself with the spectacle. He could not, however, conceal his joy at the success of his artifice ; and I perceived it struggled with that solemn affected gravity which he sought to maintain. ' Let us not remain longer among the dead,' said she, and led the Prince to the door. ' Are you now satisfied with me ?' said the Armenian to the Prince ; ' and will you now willingly fulfil my wish ?' ' All, all !' he exclaimed. They went away, and I immediately crept out of my corner. It was lucky for me that they left the door open, otherwise perhaps you might never have seen me again."

Narrative of the Count O—— continued.

Early on the morning following the above-mentioned interview with my friend, whilst I was lying musing in bed, I heard a knocking at my door. I threw my disguise carelessly over me, and ran to open it. The Armenian came in, and gave me a letter directed to ——, and likewise a considerable sum of money, partly in notes and partly in cash, desiring me at the same time to pursue my journey with the greatest despatch. " If you arrive at the place appointed expeditiously," said he, " and deliver this letter into the hands of the proper person, your recompense will be great ; but if you fail in the least particular that may be serviceable in the commission, death is inevitably your lot, though you should hide yourself in any corner of the world." These were his last words, and he went away. Had I been the person whom he thought me to be, his conduct could not have failed to accomplish his business, and I should have delivered the letter as he directed for my own interest. But he was scarcely gone, when I bolted the door, and opened the letter. It was written in the same hieroglyphical characters as the former ; and, without

waiting to dress myself properly, I ran to communicate to Lord Seymour my acquisition. We both sat down to decipher it. The contents were as follows:—

“The Prince is turned Roman Catholic, and has now consented to every thing. His uncle is no more, and he stands at the next step to the throne. A hint from me, and he is elected. The appointed day for this is the —— of April. Your’s must be killed the —— of April, and in the mean time the Prince must be proclaimed king by you. That he will agree to all your proposals and execute them, I once more assure you, and answer for his word. The enemy from without and the citizens are to attack proud Venice at the same time. Surely it must be conquered! Rejoice! From its ruins will blossom our happiness, for which we have laboured so many years. But the fruit tastes sweeter which we raise with difficulty, than that which requires no cares.

“THE CONSPIRATORS AT VENICE.”

We stood and looked at one another, without being able to utter a word. “The danger is now truly imminent,” said Lord Seymour, after a pause; “and we must discover all to the inquisition of the state, else we shall be deemed equally culpable with these villains.”

Before I could make any answer, Johnson rushed into the room. From him we learned that the Prince, the Armenian, and also Biondello, had already been secured by the officers of the inquisition, and were in close confinement.

Our terror and astonishment were indescribable: we remained for a long time immovable in the situation in which this intelligence had thrown us; and we had a still longer time to stay before we could form any resolution of what we ought to do, not so much to free ourselves from danger, as to make the situation of the Prince more tolerable. As soon as we had, in some respect, learned the dreadful plan which appeared so distinctly by the letter of the Armenian, the thought that any offence against the Rehabei here had been so often severely punished, and that it had been the constant practice of these implacable judges to condemn him to death who was only

suspected to be dangerous to them, even should he have performed the greatest and most distinguished services to the state, struck us with the most dreadful apprehension. All my fortitude forsook me. Lord Seymour, who always in misfortunes retained a coolness of temper, sat mute ; and the projecting Johnson kept his eyes fixed upon the ceiling. By the account which our faithful boatman gave us, we learned that already several noblemen had been imprisoned, and many others had escaped. Our fear was now at the highest. No doubt now remained that some person must have given them information ; and every ray of hope, which confidence inspires, forsook us. Plans were formed and immediately given up, on account of their inconsistency. Johnson took no part in them, but went away without saying a word of what was his intention ; and before we had time to interrogate him why he would leave us, he was out of sight.

He returned after he had been absent several hours : our door was suddenly opened, and a frightful officer of the inquisition entered. How the mind of a guilty person must sink at the sight of such a man, I could easily judge by my own fears, which, in spite of my innocence, almost overpowered me. I nevertheless recovered myself soon, to which the cool behaviour of Lord Seymour contributed in a great measure. " An open confession of truth and intrepidity," said he to me in a whisper, " are useful upon all occasions, and I hope will conduct us safely through this business."

After the officer had looked at us for some minutes, he told us coolly what was his commission, and that we must follow him to the tribunal. This was said without circumlocution ; and we endeavoured to determine with ourselves what could be the meaning of this exercise of their power against us. Without a single word being spoken, we arrived at the place of our destination, when we were immediately separated from each other. The room into which they conducted me, except the fortifications to prevent the escape of any person, had not the appearance of a prison. Every accommodation was contained in the apartments ; and this circumstance served to lessen my

fear. That we were confined here on account of the Prince was very evident ; but how they had discovered us in our retirement was a matter still to be accounted for. Already several hours had passed, in which I puzzled my brain to find out by what possible means this accident could have happened, when I was summoned to the audience. They looked at me with stern countenances, and required of me the history of my residence in Venice, and exhorted me with calmness to speak the truth faithfully ; for they said it would be better for me so to do, as they knew already every thing without my telling it, and that I must not think I could utter a single falsehood undetected. When I had finished my history, in which I concealed not the smallest circumstance, and after I had attested every part, the countenances of the inquisitors seemed to relax. My examination was then read to me ; and, after I had confirmed every thing therein, I was recommitted to prison.

For several days they confined me under this arrest ; during which time, contrary to my expectations, they permitted me to amuse myself with reading. After the expiration of a week they announced to me my freedom, with the condition that I should continue still at Venice, that I might, if required, undergo another examination.—The circumstances under which Lord Seymour and myself had been committed were so singular, that I had no doubt, although I had not seen him, but that he would again obtain his liberty,—and I was right ; he met me at the door, and we returned arm in arm to our own habitation. Johnson came to us, and our joy at meeting, notwithstanding our short separation, was as great as if we had not seen each other for some years. The pleasure of having regained our liberty was so sensibly felt by us, that we forgot the Prince and every thing else, and gave ourselves up entirely to excessive joy. Till then I had always thought that the welfare of the Prince had lain nearer to my heart than my own, but I found that I had deceived myself ; for otherwise how could I have become so totally taken up with the first impulse of my joy, when I knew not the least circumstance of his situation ? But I will do my heart the justice to say, that I should not so

easily have given myself up to the natural impulse of my feelings, had I not been full of hope for his safety.

All that I had hitherto heard concerning the police of this place was descriptive of cruelty, or, if this word should seem too harsh, of the greatest injustice, inasmuch as they did not sufficiently distinguish between the innocent and guilty, and maintained the horrid maxim, that it was better that many innocent people should suffer than that one guilty person should escape. They conducted themselves, however, towards me in a way so different from my ideas of their clemency, that it was not wonderful I should indulge some hope for the Prince, and prefer my own experience to what I had formerly heard, and of which I knew nothing, although my passions persuaded me to believe. I had besides, without departing from the truth, spoken so much in favour of the Prince, that I did not doubt but it would excite compassion in them for so exalted a character. Nor could it reasonably be thought that they would be so foolish as to depart in this instance from their general rules, and execute justice with rigour, particularly as, not being a Venetian nobleman, his removal would secure the possibility of future danger to them.

After the first emotions were over, we asked Johnson if he had not been in fear for us when he learned our misfortune? "Not in the least," said he, smiling, and then he gave us to understand, to our great astonishment, that he had been the cause of our being brought before the tribunal. "You!" interrupted Lord Seymour angrily; "I am very anxious to know the grounds of this singular proceeding." "It is very evident by your anger that you did not suspect my plan. Do you think that the inquisition would not have come in search of you? Must not the letter from the Armenian, and all the papers found upon the Prince, have betrayed you?"

"But it is fortunate that it did not happen. I must add, that I see no excuse for so extraordinary an undertaking, when you could not foresee the good that was to arise from it."

"That (I will affirm with the greatest truth) I could always foresee; and, besides, had it come to the worst, the

evil never could have been so great as if we had suffered it to be discovered. They will also be more satisfied if they come at the truth by our examination, than if they suspected we had kept back from making these important discoveries to the state till we were obliged to do it. — And in what an advantageous light will the unfortunate circumstances of the best of Princes be looked upon by such means, and how greatly must our free confession contribute to our excuse, which, discovering itself in a multitude of circumstances, cannot have a different effect? It certainly must dispose them to believe our word in future, when they have found that all our assertions have been so exactly conformable to the truth.”

“ You have calculated upon the future very justly, and I will spare my reproaches; but, as you kept up this manœuvre so well, you should at least have given us some intimation of your design: for I must certainly confess (you will excuse me) that you took a great liberty in acting in this manner; and that it was very dangerous to put us so suddenly and unexpectedly into a situation which we could not possibly foresee.” “ As you speak so candidly, I shall not longer oppose you; but we should have been equally unprovided for the examination, if we had been apprehended. If you recollect, I remarked, a little time before I went out, that in case we should be brought before the tribunal, it would be better for us to adhere faithfully to the truth: and could you desire any further preparation? Can any danger attend speaking the truth? Upon this ground I formed my plan, and feigned your consent; because it must end well. But the principal ground that I went upon was not to lose any time; for I was instructed early in the morning in what I ought to undertake. This accident would have certainly happened, if we had deliberated any longer, and therefore I thought it most prudent and wise to act as I did.”

“ It is a pity,” said Lord Seymour, laughing, “ that your scheme is not published; it might serve to deprive many an undertaking of its consequences.” This observation, which he joined with some friendly jokes, changed our tone suddenly and unexpectedly to a greater degree of

happiness ; and we delivered ourselves up to the felicity of the present moment, without prying the least into futurity, and without being willing to withdraw the veil which so completely obscured it. How many more happy hours would mankind enjoy if they could always do so !

“ But had we not now better dress ourselves in our own clothes ? ” said Johnson.

I thought it was better to dress again in our proper habits ; because, if any of the conspirators still remained here, we should be in less danger of being assassinated by them. We concluded this to be the wisest plan ; and Lord Seymour and Johnson went out immediately to take measures accordingly. They had not been gone above an hour, when a stranger came to me, and, in broken Latin, excused the liberty he was taking. I was surprised that he did not make an attempt to find whether I understood the Venetian language. I could not help suspecting that he already knew me, and was acquainted that, in the part I had undertaken, I had studiously avoided the appearance of understanding the Venetian tongue. And so it was. I learned, soon after he had entreated me not to keep any secret from him, that he was the keeper of the prison of the inquisition of the state, and that the Armenian had sent him with a letter to me for the —, which he requested me with earnest entreaty to deliver immediately. He gave me at the same time every advice by which I could make my escape, without creating suspicion. Men, he said, did not always escape so well as I had done, after having been cited before the tribunal ; and he tried, by every assiduous art, to make me hasten my departure. I promised every thing ; and ordered him to tell the Armenian that it was not in the least my fault, but owing to indisposition, that I did not immediately set out after the receipt of his last letter. As soon as he was gone I opened the letter, and found in hieroglyphics the following account : —

“ If immediate assistance does not arrive, all is lost. I, the Prince, and many other conspirators, are in prison. It always appeared to me that this event would take place, and therefore I had beforehand guarded against it : so that

nothing can happen of consequence, and no loss will be incurred, if our foreign friends are not too tardy. We have long agreed that the information we shall give in this place shall be exactly similar; and it will not be difficult for us to delay the examination for some time longer. While I myself was at the head of this state, and many high offices were then in my possession, I took care to leave the prison in such a state, that we could easily make our escape; and I still possess many friends who will enable us to regain our liberty, as soon as it shall appear that our coadjutors are as brave as usual. — To the Count — and — I have already written; and there is no doubt but that all will go on as much to our wishes as before, although they thought themselves so sure of us after they had taken us into custody. The bearer of this letter has also been before the tribunal, and has been examined, and was fortunately acquitted: a proof that these gentlemen are not so wise as they would willingly think themselves; and that they will become the sport of me and my confederates. Every thing else remains as before.

“THE CHIEF OF THE VENETIAN CONSPIRATORS.”

I and my companions were equally astonished at the contents of this letter, which I showed them upon their return, and particularly at the style in which it was written, and at the new base plot which was already so artificially planned and confided in. We were unanimously of opinion that this letter ought to be delivered to the inquisition; but we were not determined which of us could undertake this with the greatest propriety, without exciting the suspicions of the Armenian's coadjutors. Johnson charged himself with this commission; and immediately went out with the letter, under the supposition (as he had been formerly inspector of the Prince's finances) of having something of consequence to communicate. He was immediately admitted. They were astonished at the contents of this letter, and as much so at the possibility of so noted a prison as that of the inquisition being thus faulty. They returned me (together with a snuff-box set with brilliants, which Johnson brought me back,) their sincere thanks for the information which I had by this means given to the state.

It happened, as I suspected, after they had removed the prisoners to other convenient and secure places, they immediately examined the prison ; and they actually found iron crows, scaling-ladders, files, and such like tools, without which it would have been impossible to have made an escape from so strong a place. The greater part of them lay hid in the walls, so that they could not possibly have been found without some previous knowledge of them. They also fortunately intercepted the letters to —dr. Neither the Armenian nor any of his confederates knew any thing beforehand of this circumstance. They contrived so that they should be totally ignorant of this new scheme, intending by this means, perhaps, to entangle the conspirators the more strongly in their net ; and they entreated me to depart from Venice in my Jewish dress, and also to assume the appearance of being willing to deliver the letter which was intrusted to my charge. But neither by this means, nor the innumerable spies which were always at the service of the state, could they discover a single conspirator, except those they were already acquainted with. Some whom the spies accused falsely for the sake of money, and who were afterwards happily cleared, cannot be justly reckoned in the number.

I remained no longer absent from Venice than was necessary to put myself into a condition to appear again in the character of the Count O——. My sudden re-appearance excited great astonishment ; my friends would scarcely believe their eyes ; and I had enough to do to invent a probable history which would account for my sudden departure and reported death. They credited my assertions (in a period so full of mysteries, in which they were every where taught to expect wonders from those who stood in any manner connected with the Prince), and very readily believed, or at least pretended to believe me, which was quite sufficient for my purpose ; because they no longer made enquiries after me, which I had endeavoured all along to prevent, by assuming a mysterious air. Lord Seymour had also now reassumed his former character, and, for appearance' sake, had taken Johnson into his service.

And now all the suspected people belonging to the Prince

were at liberty ; and it excited no astonishment to see me with Lord Seymour, being an old acquaintance of his, and they even saw me take lodgings in the same hotel with him. Here we were all assembled together again, and this with the wish and consent of the inquisition, not to give them any cause of suspicion, and that they might know immediately where to find us. The precaution with which we proceeded may appear to some people unnecessary, because we never heard the least report of the Armenian having accomplices remaining, that could in the least interrupt our plans. I, for my part, employed my time in endeavouring to obtain an interview with the Prince ; but this the scrupulous inquisition constantly refused, although they conducted themselves towards me with much complaisance ; and it was with great difficulty that I could learn thus much from them, viz. that his present situation was not insupportable, and that they treated him with greater consideration than so capital a crime deserved.

With this I was obliged to content myself ; and, that the time of our waiting for the event of this important affair might appear as short as possible, we frequented every public place of amusement in the city. The best of these was what they call *Basini**, in which that reserved conduct and cold behaviour were less observable, which always banished every sociable friendship from the society of the Venetians. One evening I was present at one of these *Basini* ; and there was also an officer in a uniform at the same place. The history of the colonel and his companions came into my mind, and I could not help suspecting that it was the same person who would have murdered the Prince by means of his footman. I was not mistaken — it was indeed the colonel himself. I heard his name by accident. I could with difficulty hide my terror, in spite of all the good I had formerly heard of the colonel. I was in this case obliged to believe the evidence of the footman ; and I concluded that, perhaps out of an ill-judged zeal for

* These *Basini* were either private *Basini*, held in small houses, where the principal Venetians spent their time in private meditation, or in the society of particular friends ; or oftentimes they were a kind of club, of which the following is a regulation :—“ Whoever wished to have admission here, must be first introduced by a member, and then he could return as often as he pleased.” These meetings, therefore, were not altogether public, as we might be led to suppose from the Count O——’s account of them.

his court, he had consented that the murder of the Prince should be perpetrated. I immediately left the room, and went in quest of Lord Seymour, to whom I communicated my discovery.

"Is the colonel there now?" said he, interrupting me. "Very likely," said I; "for when I left the room he was deeply engaged at the gaming-table." "Let us then return to him," returned he. "You surely joke," I observed; "for how can I expect any good from him, since I am a friend of that Prince whom he would have murdered? Do you not rather think that he has put himself in the way of me because he has some design upon me?"

"Do you really believe that the colonel, at the request of the court, would have ordered the Prince to be murdered?" "Why do you ask me? Have you not seen Johnson's letter, in which it is so clearly proved?" "Johnson only related what he had heard from the footman, a man of very shallow judgment, who might easily be deceived, provided the sly Armenian wished to use him as a snare to entrap the Prince."

"Well, that I may not have more objections to encounter, I will readily concede to your opinion, that this colonel has really sought after the life of the Prince,—nay, even more, that he has dangerous views upon yourself,—and yet I will entreat you to go with me. We shall hazard nothing by this means; for we can easily remain at the Basini till day, and there we shall be safe enough, even if your suspicions are well founded; and you will learn also, if he is an honest man, how to despise the wicked, and will moreover be freed from a vain fear. Who knows but we may gain from him information which may be of the greatest service to us!"

I was ashamed of my childish fears, and consented to go with him.—As soon as he had an opportunity he began a conversation with the colonel, which I overheard at a distance; and they soon became so well pleased with each other that the colonel promised Lord Seymour to breakfast with him the next morning, which circumstance was highly gratifying to me, as I hoped the business would be then entirely explained.—The whole company seemed to be well disposed to pleasure, and pursued every thing that was

agreeable or entertaining. They joked, laughed, and sometimes entertained themselves with play, according to the taste of each individual. The morning star had risen before we consented to return home. The colonel, pleased with the former invitation of Seymour, agreed to go home with him immediately; and we took him in the coach between us.

“This then is your lodging,” said he, as we stopped opposite to our apartment. “Now this is lucky for me; for I can at the same time pay a visit which I was willing to have made this day, but could not find my man.” “May I ask,” enquired Seymour, “who this person is?” “The Count O——.” Lord Seymour gave me a side look, which I returned significantly. “Do you know Count O——?” said Seymour, after a pause; “you and I will visit him to become acquainted with him; and I hope your visit will be by no means unpleasant, as at first I feared it might be.” “I cannot tell you how the affair hangs, and (you will excuse me) were I not an open-hearted German, grown grey in the midst of gaiety, where one learns to hate dissimulation, as you are desirous of procuring a secret from me, I would invent a tale to deceive you, and then laugh at you behind your back.”

The open conduct of the colonel brought him more and more into my favour, particularly as he did not take the least pains to conceal any thing. Johnson now came to us and opened the door. The colonel awoke as from a dream. He asked Seymour his name, and, as soon as he had heard it, stepped back a few steps, and stood with folded arms in astonishment. “Seymour!” he exclaimed, “are you Lord Seymour? Have I not out of pure civility committed a stupid blunder, in not having long ago asked your name? And am I really with you—and even going to breakfast with you? Surely you will not make me go mad!—And you,” addressing himself to me, “perhaps you are Count O—— himself?”

“The same, at your service.” He took my hand, and shook it very heartily. “I rejoice from my heart,” said he, “to see you; and am truly glad to become acquainted with you.” Every remaining distrust which I entertained

was removed, so soon as I learned from him that he had been here only a few days, and that it was the first time he had ever been in Venice; and this he proved by many incontestable evidences. It was also evident that Lord Seymour had judged rightly, and that the appearance of this colonel with the Prince's footman must have been an invention of the Armenian; for the colonel was confined at the very time by a severe illness. We became more and more communicative to each other, and this was not wonderful; for, besides every other consideration which could induce us to become so, a mutual interest drew us together, as we both hoped to clear up every thing relating to the Prince, concerning whom we now began to converse. What I was able to tell the colonel respecting the Prince, the reader already knows from the foregoing part of this history; and, for the better elucidation of this matter, I will relate in regular order whatever he informed me respecting the history of the Prince.

"You have, perhaps," said the Colonel, addressing himself to me, "heard from the Prince himself what a good understanding subsists between the present Regent of —— and myself. — And I must say, I cannot conceive how the Prince should take affront at a letter (which, I will believe, might contain some harsh expressions), and suffer himself to be totally separated from him for such a trifle. Would it not have been better to have endeavoured to refute the false calumniations, which appeared at last to be too well founded? Good God! perhaps by that means all these misfortunes might have been prevented. But, instead of this, he returned so harsh an answer to the good man, that it forced tears from his eyes. I must tell you, that he converses with me in the most friendly manner. What could be more likely than that an irreconcilable rupture should happen between them? Neither of them would concede, so long as each person thought himself in the right, and to be the injured party. And yet my master would, in all probability, have condescended so far as to request the Prince to justify himself, had it not been for the shameful interposition of some men, whose interest it evidently was to prevent this reconciliation. — You must not think that the bad reports

which you heard concerning the regent were altogether true. He is really a good man, although no philosopher ; nor will he even purchase the title of a great man by shedding human blood : and hence it happens that many people call him a fool ; but they only show their own weakness.”*

“ But,” I interrupted him, “ have you not learned by chance who it is that has calumniated the Prince at his court ? ” — “ The accounts came from different places, and agreed so exactly with each other that they would have almost made us believe impossibilities. The first account was given by the President ——, who had a correspondent in Venice that communicated every thing to him ; but the principal account was from the Baron F——, who had always been so warm a friend of the Prince’s, that one would rather have expected him to have written in his favour than against him.” “ I would risk all my happiness for a nutshell,” I exclaimed, “ if the Baron F—— ever wrote a word to the court prejudicial to his master ; yea, rather ” — “ We now know, with certainty,” said he, interrupting me hastily, “ that all was treachery ; but how could it be known at that time ? — The shameful and infamous plot is now unfolded ; and I am come here to have the whole discovered, and to imprison all the other conspirators.”

“ Have you,” exclaimed Lord Seymour and myself, at the same instant, “ been able to discover this secret conspiracy, which the very watchful and vigilant state-inquisition could not effect ? ” “ The President ——, whom I have already mentioned, was also in the plot, and had been the cause of all the changes which took place among us. A terrible fall from his horse brought him to death’s door. — All the physicians gave him over. — But his accusing conscience, which continued to torment him, did not permit him to die in peace. For some time he lay in the greatest agony, sweating as it were drops of blood. At last he desired to speak in private with ——, because he had some information of the greatest importance to communicate to

* We easily perceive here the character of a friend ; but, nevertheless, we must not altogether reject the whole of his account. — The truth commonly lies between extremes ; and that the reader might not be deceived by the former account, and might judge for himself, I have set down every thing that related to the Regent.

him"; and we learned with horror that he had put to death the hereditary Prince, and the uncle of the present Prince, by means of poison, which he had procured from Venice; and that a similar fate was likewise to have befallen —. Death, certainly the most terrible that ever fell to the lot of a man, prevented his discovering every thing. — He had burnt his papers beforehand; and it was with difficulty that he could name to us the principal actors of the conspiracy in this place. Only the Count — and myself knew any thing of this affair; and I have travelled day and night to arrive as soon as possible. The inquisition were astonished at my account, and you well know the rapidity with which they act. — Yesterday I learned from them, under the strongest injunctions of secrecy, what you, Lord Seymour, and a Mr. Johnson had done for the Prince; and this induced me to seek you immediately, to become acquainted with you; and I hoped also to become your friend: — but the servant told me you were not at home."

Johnson now came from a side room, in which he could overhear all our conversation; and a scene followed, the remembrance of which will ever be dear to me, and in which the amiable character of the colonel became more and more conspicuous. — But the more interesting it might be to us, the less, perhaps, would the reader gain by the description; and I shall therefore omit it, as it does not regularly belong to the history. — By means of the colonel, who had received unlimited power from the court to act in this business relating to the Prince, according to his best judgment, we obtained access to his highness. He viewed me with a smile full of grief, and shook my hand in a sorrowful manner. "You come not, my dear Count, I hope, to reproach me?" said he to me, after a short pause, during which I endeavoured to summon up all my resolution. "Prince," said I, "can you conceive this of me? I wish to God I had not found you in this situation; and I would give my life if it could undo every thing. But I believe this was ordered in the councils of eternal Providence, which often permits evil to happen, that good may arise out of it; and you have at least my compassion, although I can give you no other assistance."

“ I thank you ; you pour sweet balsam into my wounded mind : but, alas ! I must not accept even this compassion. I deserve not the compassion of any man, and least of all yours. Yes, that would be too much for a sinner of my description. I know how readily men excuse themselves, but I cannot do it, and you will therefore conclude whether it is possible another should.—Let me confess to you, that the chain of sins which I have committed almost distracts me.” “ But were you not driven to the commission of them all by irresistible artifice ? Oh ! I know the whole of the transaction ; I know more even than you do ; and here I will declare before the all-wise God, that you have resisted every thing like a man, that you did not suffer yourself to be easily overcome, and that hundreds in your place would have yielded long ago.” “ But I, however, sunk at last, and so deep !—Was this necessary ? Had I not the power to withstand it ? Ah ! I know I had ; for what would be virtue if it had not the power to combat the charms of vice ? And what would be man, if you should take from him his free agency ? Could we shun vice, and adhere to virtue if we were forced by circumstances to act as mere machines ? No, my dear Count ; I had rather perish under the weight of all my unworthiness, than ascribe to God the cruelty that he can create men like an artificer, who from the same metal makes instruments for the benefit of mankind, and for their destruction.”

“ That I will not say ; but Oh ! Prince, I feel the narrow limits of my reason, and can offer you no farther comfort than what our religion affords, ‘ God is loving and merciful.’ But he is just in the same degree, without which he would be deficient in his greatest attribute, perfection. How well it is for you, then, that you did not willingly commit these errors, nor until you became, as it were, intoxicated with zeal !” “ I have answered that argument before—that does not excuse me. I disregarded my true friends, and suffered them to be murdered in cold blood.” “ But you did not consent to it till you thought you were convinced that they were traitors, and had betrayed you.” “ I consented to it, however. Invent no more excuses for me, dear Count ; for those crimes will

totally destroy my comforts." "Will you then pertinaciously reject every comfort that your friend or your religion can offer?"

"That I will not; but must not the remembrance of my disgrace for ever follow me? Must it not pursue me to eternity, and even there make me wretched? Can I drive from my memory my past conduct? Can God forgive me? Alas! my dear friend, all consolation is lost — every hope gone! An arm which has once been broken retains the effect of the fracture for ever." "But, notwithstanding, it afterwards performs its services, and the possessor very often forgets that it has been injured. — Believe me, upon my word, you may be happy again if you choose. Shall I remind you of those eminent consoling words in the Holy Scripture:—‘There is more joy in heaven over one sinner that repenteth, than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance.’” The Prince meditated; his countenance lost its fearful expression. His eyes were fixed, and darted wildly a look of despair, but with a mixture of composure that denoted hope. — I thought proper to leave him alone.

That the reader may comprehend, in the most adequate point of view, the situation of this unhappy man, I have put down the whole dialogue. Oh! reader, bestow on him thy compassion, who feels thy reproaches, which will be a benefit to the heart. Do not triumph that thou hast not yet been seduced. — Let his errors teach thee, that the smallest step from the path of virtue is the beginning of the greatest crime.

At my next visit, I found the Prince, to my great happiness, more composed than when I saw him the last time. Before him the new Testament was lying open, which I had procured him at his desire. — “Now,” said he, “I understand many things which before were dark to me. What a benefit is our religion! It has again elevated my soul, which was cast down by so many heavy burdens, to the highest pitch of gladness. To that alone I am indebted for not falling a sacrifice to the most horrid despair. Now the hope again revives that God will forgive me for the sake of his Son, who sacrificed himself for me.”

He seemed to have renounced every thing in this world, and his whole occupation was to prepare himself for futurity ; religion was his only thought. — “ And have you no other wish, the fulfilling of which might make you happy ? ” I asked him at last. — He continued thoughtful for some time. “ If it were possible,” said he, “ I could wish to understand entirely the texture of the deceptions and malice through which I became so unfortunate. Nobody can give me a key to it but the Armenian, and they will refuse my seeing him. I should also choose to die in my native country, and to speak, were it only one word, to the ——, and to ask his pardon : — dear Count, you see, my wishes go too far ; I renounce them. I promised him to do all in my power to fulfil his request, and hastened immediately to the colonel.

Happily he met me in the room. “ Behold,” said he, “ a new proof how nobly my master the —— thinks, and how much is to be hoped from him for the Prince. This moment I received the following letter from him.” He gave it to me, and I read it : —

“ MY DEAREST COLONEL,

“ My situation at your departure did not permit me to give you other than common charges, in respect to the Prince. — There is no mistrust in your mind, nor deceit in your heart, to prevent my making you acquainted with my inclination very distinctly, and not to leave every further proceeding to your prudence ; I am confident that you will endeavour to fulfil in every particular, on account of your love of justice, and your hatred to wickedness, all that can alleviate the distresses of our unhappy Prince. Know then, that I forgive him every thing from my heart, release him from every punishment, and even wish that he may become my successor. It is on this side that we ought to contemplate him. My heart dictates it to me when I consider that he did not act in that way willingly, but was urged to it, by unheard of deception and villany. I wait for your objections. It is understood that all this can happen only as soon as he shall have reformed himself entirely ; and I hope this will be effected [by his manifold

sufferings: the whirlpool of misfortunes and accumulated miseries into which he was thrown must have opened his eyes and purified his soul.

“Should my wishes, however, not agree with the consequences, I can do nothing more than forgive him on account of myself; yet I do not expect that all must be kept secret from him, that my proffered forgiveness may not put a stop to his conversion. If I should die before I have an opportunity to relate to him all myself, you may show him this letter. The whole history shall be made known in Venice, according to my wish, and the punishment of the criminals. As soon as the Prince is dismissed as an evidence, you may come secretly hither with him. That all this may not give trouble, I have written a letter to the tribunal, which you only must deliver.

“Nobody here knows any thing of the fearful history; and you will, therefore, contrive as much as possible to assist the prevailing secrecy.

“My old malady has again attacked me, which sorrow has not a little contributed to increase, and my writing and broken sentences will show this distinctly. — I believe my end is not far off; and I wish once more to speak to the Prince. Let this induce you not to be detained by any circumstance that is not of real consequence from hastening your departure.

“ — D — .”

“Is it not true that he is a most noble man?” exclaimed the colonel, and tears of joy rolled down his cheeks. “See, how he gave himself the trouble, on his sick bed, whence it must have been very difficult for him to collect or connect his thoughts, to write to me this letter for the welfare of the Prince, who in the mean time — but let us forget that, for he was also formerly a good man.”

The colonel now took his hat and sword and departed, that he might deliver the enclosed letter to the tribunal. This and his representations had such an effect, that the following day the Armenian was conducted to the Prince, who surveyed him with composure. No look of revenge disfigured his eye — no reproach escaped his lips. What a difference between him and the Armenian, who now

seemed to call up all his powers to hide his embarrassment!

“Prince,” he began, “you see my embarrassment, which (for what reason I know not) I am not able to conceal. Have you commanded me to be brought hither, to delight yourself with my sufferings? I swear to you, you shall behold me no more, although my body is so much enfeebled by imprisonment, that I am now unable to command it according to my desires. Or, do you wish for the happiness,” whilst he looked around the room, “to see me murdered before your eyes? Oh! I shall not die like a coward, for to me life is but a vapour — I feared nobody, and my death shall not cost me a sigh.” “You wrong yourself,” answered the Prince with sorrow, “by such an idea. I forgive from my heart all that you have done to me; I forgive with joy that you made me unhappy, if you can be benefited by that?”

“Can you forgive me? I know not why this thought so much delights me. But what do you desire of me?” “An explanation of what has happened to me.” “No, that cannot be. — Oh! Prince, I acknowledge your compassion, which I do not deserve. It affects me more than the most excruciating torments. Now I contemplate myself as a monster. But to what purpose? I see that I am overpowered, and my schemes are at an end. Is this the case with all my confederates? You wish for an explanation: — hear then my history, without which nothing can be understood by you. I will deliver it to you faithfully; for at present it is impossible for me to lose any thing by it. You cannot think otherwise than that I am one of the greatest villains, and my narration will tell you the same. This short dialogue will convince you, that the *leaden roofs* alone have produced in me a feebleness which I can bear no longer; the former strength of my principles are certainly not fitted for a deficiency of intellect. You must ascribe it to that, if in my narration I should make a mistake.”

History of the Armenian,

RELATED BY HIMSELF.

“ My father was a senator in this city, which once trembled at my word, but now rejoices that it need no longer fear me ; like the child who is pleased to see the wall beaten against which it hurt itself. He had conducted himself in many honourable situations with prudence and judgment. On account of these qualities, which he knew how to make the best use of, and his great experience, he was invested with the office of ambassador at Rome. His young consort, who loved him with the warmest affection, accompanied him thither, and presented him a few weeks after their arrival there with a son—this was I. The excessive joy of my father was but of short duration — my mother gave me life but to lose her own by it, for she died a few days after her delivery. Doctor Silvio, who had attended my mother during her pregnancy, and by his indefatigable care had acquired the confidence of my father in the highest degree, from this moment took charge of me. He consigned me to the care of his wife, who had been a little time before brought to bed of a daughter, and promised, with the greatest pleasure, to fulfil all the duties of a mother towards me. In the strictest sense of the words she did not fulfil her promises; for she spoiled me, and never, in the smallest degree, observed what propensities I discovered, and how they ought to be directed. The Doctor believed also that he had done his duty when he prescribed a dose for me from time to time ; and as for my vicious tricks (which are usually called the early blossoms of a more than ordinary genius), nobody ever thought about them. Hence it happened that my disposition, not confined by any curb, very soon took a bent which no restraint was able to control.

“ Before I could pronounce my father’s name, he was recalled from his embassy. It was his desire that I might (before I should know him) be educated here at a distance from Venice, and be drawn from my obscurity when I was formed as he intended me to be. He thought to procure

me by that means great advantages over other children of our nobility, who were in general most wretchedly educated. Every thing was made use of, both to form my mind and body. I comprehended every lesson easily, and very seldom forgot it again ; I possessed judgment and memory in a very extraordinary degree. Every science, art, or exercise, which they taught me, soon became mere play to me ; and I very often embarrassed my teachers with questions and objections. I was every where celebrated as a wonderful child, and the papers very often extolled me and my *bon mots*. This was carried so far that foreigners of the greatest note frequently came to see me, or sent for me to their houses. By the extravagant presents which they made me, the Doctor, whom I shall call father, as I thought him so till a future period, became very soon one of the richest of his profession. I hope not to incur the odium of gasconading. The idea is intolerable to me. No ; I have facts enough, which would seem incredible if they had not been transacted before witnesses. And what should I gain by it ? Must not even my extraordinary talents be an additional incitement to every one who does not profess my principles to condemn me ? Will not every one who conceives that a great gulf is placed between himself and me say, that the opinion and use which I made of my extraordinary talents, rendered me the greatest monster with which the earth was ever cursed in the form of a human being ? Am I not to be detested for abusing talents which, if otherwise used, might have blessed mankind a thousand fold, and which employed so basely became its curse ?

“ Prince, I am not able to conceal my sensations — for what cause I know not. I always had fortitude enough, but now it ceases. It is as if all my confidence were deserting me, and I was on the point of cursing the hour in which I was born. Do you shudder at the idea ? — Remember that I do not repent of any of my actions, although they may be the cause why I shall not breathe out my last sigh upon a downy pillow. But yet, not to give any pain to your re-converted heart, I sometimes shall play the character of a repentant sinner. I tell you this beforehand, that you may not take it for earnest, and utter, before the

proper time, some pious sighs over the lost but recovered sheep.* But to continue. My external form corresponded with my mind : whoever beheld me, caressed and admired me ; and my father would have been ashamed to chastise such a universal darling, if I had ever been so incautious as to suffer myself to be surprised in the execution of an unpardonable trick. I soon considered every encomium as a tribute which was due to me. If I took a dislike to any one, it lasted much longer than the hatred of children generally does ; and if any one ventured to blame me, woe be to him ! for I never rested till I revenged myself. One incident may be recorded here as an example of the rest, and will give you an idea of what I was in my seventh year.

“ My father had a very sincere friend, named Cabellioni. He visited us almost every day ; and, notwithstanding his continual gravity, he was esteemed by the whole family, because he was universally believed to be a man of principle and integrity. I alone was perfectly indifferent about him, till the period when I hated him from my soul. I was playing at cards with some other boys ; and being already too much accustomed to have the advantage, I was angry that Fortune did not that evening use me very politely. I endeavoured to gain that which she denied me by unfair means, and such as were far beyond my years. My companions, who were all much older than myself, did not perceive it : however, I had a lecture for my unfair dealing ; for Signor Cabellioni, without my perceiving it, slipped himself behind my chair, and was observing me. As much as I was enraged at his reprimand, I yet knew how to hide my vexation under a smiling countenance, and had presence of mind enough to profess that my tricks were merely a trial to see how far I could go on with them before my playfellows discovered them. Cabellioni shook his head thoughtfully ; and this very circumstance enraged me so much the more against

* These words were accompanied with a burst of laughter, the thought of which even now makes my hair to stand erect. His countenance was indescribably frightful. At that moment I was doubtful whether he was really a human being: for what must he be who could consider repentance of actions (for which Satan himself could not blush) as disgraceful ; and when it oppressed him with violence, seek to conceal it before us by the most shameful duplicity?

him, because it was a proof that he did not believe my excuses : I was obliged to wait several days before I could be revenged.

“ Behind our house there was a small garden, and a summer-house. A party of my father’s friends were drinking chocolate in it. Cabellioni was leaning with his back against a window, which was very low. With the greatest ease I got up to it on the outside, and fastened to his large periwig a piece of packthread, to which also was affixed a heavy stone. This I laid upon the window frame, in such a manner that the smallest movement Cabellioni made must throw it down, and consequently carry away the wig with it. Scarcely had I very gravely seated myself in my place when this happened. While the company broke out into a laugh at the ridiculous appearance the astonished Cabellioni made, I ran out to unfasten the wig from the stone, and restored it to its owner : he thanked me for this attention as kindly as if I had rendered him a great benefit ; but whilst he caressed me I meditated (not yet sufficiently revenged) upon a new scheme, which would do him real injury, and I found it very easy to accomplish. Cabellioni had a very rare collection of fine porcelain, on which he set his heart. I thought of nothing less than the depriving him of his dearest treasure by destroying it ; and in this I succeeded without incurring the smallest suspicion : I left not one single piece whole ; and the next day I had the pleasure to see him bewail his misfortune to my father, with tears in his eyes.

“ This thirst for revenge, which could be roused to the highest degree by the most trifling advantage which any one gained over me, or by the smallest offence against my pride, increased so much, that, even in my sixteenth year, I plunged, in cool blood, a dagger into the heart of one of my companions, because I was reprimanded on his account by one of my masters. I threw the body into the Tiber, and no one ever knew of this action.— You will easily imagine what an effect it must have had upon me, that all my undertakings ; succeeded and I frequently was able to procure the greatest advantage by them.”

“ But,” said the Prince, interrupting him, “ the most

consummate hypocrite has moments (be it ever so seldom) when his real countenance may be discovered through the mask. Was this never your case?"

"It happened but very seldom to me; and then I always managed to extricate myself so well, that the most refined wickedness was willingly believed to be the intemperance of youth.—In such cases I never spared my tears; I accused myself, magnified the crime, severely reproached myself with it, and often, when my preceptors had forgotten it, pretended to recall it to my mind with the deepest sighs. They embraced me with rapture, and begged me not to think any more about it. Had I reason to fear that one of my tricks must unavoidably be discovered, I was immediately the first to make it known to them; on which account they naturally placed unlimited confidence in my candour. By these means, I easily discovered the weak side of every one with whom I was at all acquainted, and, as soon as it was necessary, I knew how to make this discovery serve my purposes, and this aided me in the commission of many crimes; for their eyes were always blinded with regard to me, and those who surrounded me did not narrowly watch me. My father spent the few hours of leisure which his public business afforded him in his laboratory, and was too much occupied by his studies to observe me otherwise than superficially; because that fairness of character in me which is inherent in a child was merely external appearance. He seldom spoke to me except at table, and there I always contrived to display such a brilliant side of my character, to set off all my talents to such advantage, that he always treated me with encomiums. As for my mother, I only had to say a few soothing things to her, and she readily forgot all that she had observed wrong in me; and my preceptors were satisfied when they received their monthly stipend, and praised my talents when, to soothe my ambition, I had learned more than had been assigned me.

"By all these great faults of my youth,—by the greatest ambition, and insufferable pride, which made me sometimes look down with contempt upon the greatest men,—by the detestable envy, and the unconquerable desire for revenge on all whom I thought my enemies, I possessed an

unbounded and never-satisfied wish to govern. All my playfellows were obliged to submit to my authority. Where I dared not to command, I employed other means to attain my end, and which very seldom failed. I was the master of the house, and sometimes commanded when my conduct bespoke obedience. I knew well what would lead in every instance to the gratification of my wishes ; I could act with the greatest humility in every situation ; and there was not a moment when I could not shift my disguise at pleasure. Of good qualities which I possessed, according to the ideas of moralists, I can reckon but very few ; because I knew how to use them for my own benefit. However, I will resume my relation, having explained my ideas of right and wrong : otherwise you often would not understand me, if I should absent myself too far from the common mode of speaking, and use language agreeable to my principles.

“With talents to comprehend any thing very quickly, and to form of it a proper idea, I was also possessed of fine sensibility, which was affected by the most trifling circumstance. If I once began any undertaking I persevered in it with the greatest obstinacy, without being deterred by the most formidable obstacles ; (for to give it up I was ashamed) though the consequences might not be at all pleasant to me. My pleasing, flattering behaviour enchanted all, although it was nothing more than policy, which the pious simpleton degrades with the name of hypocrisy. To govern every where soon became my determination ; to shine and to be admired, my favourite thought. To satisfy it, those means only seemed to me fit which would have deterred other people ; and the most expeditious way to arrive at my aim was the most welcome to me. A path over putrified skeletons seemed not at all frightful to me, if it was but the nearest. The little advantage I could gain by the misfortune of other people, was, however, a great acquisition to me. My heated imagination pointed out to me the pinnacle upon which I should hereafter be elevated, and painted my prosperity to me in my night dreams in glowing colours. I looked with ecstasy upon my rising consequence, and was delighted with it ; like the

hero, who rejoiced at seeing his brother's blood which twined a laurel round his temples. I was often secretly vexed that my birth did not give me a right to regencies or command ; but I soon found out the method to procure them, and my chagrin was dissipated.

“ When a boy, my thoughts were often engaged on that subject ; for my comrades frequently told me that I did not pay any attention to the game. The man possessed of a knowledge of human nature would have laughed or sighed within himself at such ideas, according to his humour ; or would have looked upon me, perhaps, as a fool full of wild projects, and to whom Bedlam would be a benefit ; but my reflections never escaped my lips.

“ Earlier than common I left the circle which was drawn for my age ; I shook off my childish behaviour, like a caterpillar which, warmed by the beams of the sun, emerges before its time from the surrounding film. Urged by the most violent desire for knowledge, I undertook to accomplish objects which surmounted the experience of my years. I was never satisfied. The first step that I took in this new field displayed the horizon before me ; and the unexpected clearness which it represented to my mind, gave me courage to venture on and to study it closer. I was dissatisfied with myself that my spirit had not wings ; for I was often obliged to stay a long time to accomplish the object, which at first appeared to me like little hills at a distance. Upon that which I could attain without much difficulty, I ventured first. Every day the fondness my father entertained for chemical experiments increased. His patients were obliged to sigh in pain whilst he was busied in attending to the crucibles ; and in a little time not one person employed him. This was perfectly agreeable to his wishes, for he was less disturbed. I was obliged very often to stifle a laugh, when I covered him with coal dust, and saw him come from his laboratory smothered with dirt ; but I thought that chemistry must have some particular charms, to attach my father so forcibly to it,—and this was sufficient to excite my curiosity, and induce me to enquire into the nature of the science.

“ Nothing was easier than to request the Doctor to give me permission to spend the following day in his laboratory; and he triumphed, indeed, at my proposal. My mother, who was an inveterate enemy to such business, because it made a great deal of dirt, and spoiled the skin, endeavoured to prevent my application to it, but in vain; none of her objections had any weight with my father, although he had shown her much respect in other cases. To the remark, that it was too early for me to begin, she added—that it did not at all suit me, with a sarcastic smile; whilst my father maintained, that such an excellent attachment to the art could not commence too early, nor fail to produce the most beneficial effects:— I kissed from my mother’s lips, all her objections, and my first resolution remained;— I went, at daybreak, with my father into the laboratory.

“ The many instruments which I found there, — ovens, melting pots, coals of every sort and description,—excited, in the first instance, my attention. My father had not time to answer the multitude of questions that I put to him, and he desired a little patience. That I thought was to set a boundary to my active mind, which it could not submit to; and when my father absented himself I immediately went to work. He corrected my indiscretion, and put that into my hands which was fitted for a beginner; but this method was too tedious for me. My ambition alone prevented my not giving it up, for I was certain of being exposed to the laughter of my mother, who had announced the difficulties to me beforehand; and I studied not to lose any thing in the esteem of my father, who was so proud of my showing such an early attachment to the science. The hope to attract new admirers bid defiance to my dissatisfaction; and I went through every part of the business which my father set me upon with the greatest fortitude. This restraint did not last long; for I very soon discovered a real taste for chemical processes, and became as fond of the science as my father.—I hope I do not deserve any reproach from you, because I am here a little too explicit. If I had given to you only a mere sketch of it, it might have appeared to you improbable; for I was then no more than eleven years of age.

“ In a short time I made such progress that my father was astonished. I manufactured phosphorus of the best quality, made sympathetic ink of every kind, and invented particular things which no person but myself is acquainted with: I had now to shine in a new department amongst my schoolfellows, and other inexperienced persons. I practised the miraculous, and they thought me a phenomenon. They were astonished prodigiously, when they saw at night around my whole body a brilliant flame, or when I filled the whole room with light by the vapour of camphor, or when I struck fire with a dagger against the wall of the room, or played some other tricks of that kind. All seemed from this circumstance to keep at a distance from me; for they feared me without loving me, though that is not common in those years, when our hearts beat warmly in our bosom, and are open to every tender tie. It flattered my ambition that I had not a rival. By the extraordinary appearance which I sought to give to every one of those insignificant tricks, I obtained excellence; and I was satisfied with it, as I had no friend, no confidant, that would have been an acquisition agreeable to my natural character. I pursued my way alone, and very early found the avenues to every human heart shut against me. I seemed very often to act the friend, but in fact was never sincere. Our servants also were very much afraid of me: my tricks frightened them, and my boastings were believed. My father laughed at their childish fear, and suffered them to remain in ignorance — because it amused him.

“ To be thus always surrounded by persons who thought me far superior to themselves, and who acknowledged it, you may easily conceive, had a great influence on my character in the subsequent period of my life. In relating the trifles which formerly delighted me, I will not lose the time which I must bestow upon greater actions. My impetuous disposition did not permit me to meditate long upon any thing. Every book in my father’s library which suited my purpose, I read with the greatest avidity, and I soon made, with the assistance of them, and my own inventions, experiments which were not common. That this is true you may easily conjecture, when I say that I

thought many of them worthy to be made use of, and applied them, Prince, in your adventures, where I had to fear curiosity. Till I come to these I shall say no more of them. — A certain book, which I found in my father's library, was of great service to me: it was written by Albertus Magnus *, in the Latin language. From it I learned several things, and their use, which conducted me always farther; and I was likewise possessed of a great number of other instruments, as magical lanterns, magnets, electrical machines, &c.; as my father had already a large collection of them. With the electrical machine, which was at that time almost unknown, and which they knew not how to manage, I made many attempts; and several of my discoveries effectually answered my purpose.

“ Let me now overleap the space of time till my sixteenth year. The greatest part of it was taken up with such business (though I did not neglect any other) which could be serviceable to the cultivation of my science. The little circle in which I had lived till then, and in which I had shone, and tyrannised, became now too narrow for me. The applause and admiration of those who daily surrounded me was tedious to me, because I no longer found pleasure in it. There always burned in me a desire for great achievements, which never could be satisfied. I easily perceived that my father would not willingly suffer me to go from him; and I resolved, without much difficulty, to make myself a path into the great world without his consent. Do not wonder at that; for every thing was disregarded so soon as it hindered the gratification of my passions. The following night I packed up those things which would be necessary and useful to me on my journey; and at the break of day I found myself in the right road, and full of exultation from the prospect of success in my plan. I left for my foster parents a letter, which I laid in a place where I knew they would not find it before evening; and at that time I believed I should be safe from being discovered.

* The title of that book is: “ Albertus Magnus de Secretis Mulierum; item de Virtutibus Herbarum, Lapidum, et Animalium.” Amst. 1665.

“ ‘ MY DEAR PARENTS,

“ ‘ My spirit soars beyond the sphere in which I am confined under your auspices, and seeks after things that I can never attain in your society. These I am going in pursuit of ; and let this serve as an excuse for my leaving you so suddenly, and without bidding farewell, as I did not think that you would give me your consent.

“ ‘ A better method to accomplish my purpose, and which might have been more agreeable to you, I could not find.

“ ‘ Your

“ ‘ FERDINANDO.’

“ Without having any settled plan, I passed the first town-gate. It was the same to me whither I went ; and, wrapped up in contemplating the prospect of any future day, I walked through the street without observing the objects which surrounded me. The road that I pursued was encompassed with small bushes, which by degrees grew thicker and thicker, as I pursued the track. ‘ Stop ! ’—cried a thundering voice, and immediately a frightful fellow stood before me, who held a cocked pistol to my breast. I appeared willing to deliver up to him the property that I had about me ; but, when he was off his guard, I wrenched the pistol from his hand, and at the same moment plunged a dagger into his breast. I made myself master of his money. The passport too, which I found in his pocket, struck me as a thing which might one time or other be useful to me, and I secured it. By the assistance of his clothes, I disguised myself so that no person could possibly know me. Thus was I secure against any warrants that might be issued to apprehend me ; and extremely happy that so fortunate an adventure had at once enriched, and enabled me to pursue my journey with greater security.

“ The extravagant ideas which I had of myself, and upon which I built the greatest expectations, were soon dissipated by experience ; for, in every city that I travelled through, I found the total reverse of that, which I had supposed would take place. I flattered myself that I

should be received every where with open arms ; and with what astonishment did I learn, that no credit was given to the idle and bombastic tales that had been circulated respecting me ! I cannot conceive how it happened that I put up with such gross affronts, and why I did not seek to revenge the insult in a manner which would have taught the people in future to credit my assertions. Was it for want of worldly experience ? Or did the charms of novelty so much enchant me, as to prevent any other circumstance from making an impression upon my mind ? — Both might, perhaps, have influenced my conduct ; together with the piercing reflection, that I was an abandoned outcast upon the world. My former resolute spirit seemed quite lost, and an irresistible power pressed me to return to my parents.* As long as my money lasted, however, all went on very well ; but I observed with sorrow, that it decreased very much, and that the furies of want would soon begin to attack me. I saw no way to prevent the dreadful consequences of such a misfortune — I confess that my indolence sometimes overpowered me with shame ; but, still retaining my old prejudices in favour of my abilities, I went into an inn, with scarcely any thing in my pocket, and suffered myself to be treated like a gentleman, without ever thinking in what way I was to satisfy the landlord. I could with very little trouble change my dress, and disfigure my face and person, so that no one could discover me ; and in case of necessity I intended to practise that artifice.

“ The greater part of the strangers who dined with me at the same table called for cards after the cloth was removed. They invited me to play. The valuable ring I had on my finger, I suspected, attracted their notice ; flattering themselves, no doubt, that I should fall an easy prey, from my youth and inexperience. They played very high ; but I soon found, from the many dishonest schemes I pursued, that I had the advantage of them ; I stripped them of almost every thing they had. In the height of anger, they gave up the game ; and, elevated with my success, I reproached myself for not having followed before

* Or it was, perhaps, the piercing voice of conscience.

such a lucrative business. From that moment I resolved to make it my principal study ; and I was so successful, that in a little time it led me to keep a coach and servants. My youth, I thought, would be a bar to that respect which is in general paid to age ; so, to obviate that difficulty, I contrived to make myself appear a man of about thirty years of age ; and, as at that time I was as tall as I am now, the deception was practised with effect ; for, by an artificial beard, brown manly colour, and false testimonials, I procured an entrance into all eminent societies. Besides gaming, I did not neglect to satisfy my attachment for extraordinary performances. At every place where I resided I played some trick or other, for which they generally remembered me. But they were all however, of such a nature that they did not do any material harm. Thus, for example, many an eminent prelate became the object of laughter, if I ornamented his cowl with a jack-ass's head : many a lady was out of countenance, when I assured her that, instead of a red riband she had put on a grey one ; and she at last found this a truth before a looking-glass. Another scarcely could recover herself from a fit, when they told her, that she resembled a black lady to a hair ; and a third was half dead, when she perceived that the beauty-spots on her face, which she had managed with great care, looked like sun, moon, and stars, and had all the colours of the rainbow.

“ I only mention these tricks to you that I, might not leave a blank in my narrative, but will not trouble you with them farther, because I think they are mere trifles, and fit only for the stage of a mountebank. I very seldom had any other views than those of momentary pleasure, and to see myself admired, and looked upon by those in whose company I practised such foibles ; they have not the least influence upon my future history. You may easily inform yourself of those mysterious pranks, if you procure the book of *Albertus Magnus*.

“ I must now turn to those events which originated with me, or have at least been guided by me, in order that I might ascend to the highest pinnacle of my ambition. The pious drone, who neglects to make use of the

wings which nature has bestowed upon him, will no doubt say that they are the offspring of malice, revenge, and deception, and stamp them with his detestation, because, from his natural stupidity, he is not able to fathom the design. Many are rendered famous by following the systems of their predecessors ; but I was without that advantage, and depended entirely upon myself. I acted coolly, but not without machines the smallest motion of which I had calculated with the greatest accuracy. Villains, in general, destroy those whom accident throws in their way. I only committed murder when I discovered any enemies to my plans ! You, Prince, will see I played by that a capital character."

Narrative of the Count O—— resumed.

The Armenian here paused and endeavoured to conceal his repentance, by the ecstasy into which he laboured to throw us and himself. But it had seized so powerfully upon his hardened heart, that, in spite of all his artifices, we could perceive his remorse ; and he very soon became exhausted. We were obliged to permit him to go away. That his health might not entirely be destroyed, which was already very much injured by the terrible prison in which he had been confined, under the leaden roofs of St. Mark's Place ; and fearing that he might be prevented by a sudden death, or madness, from giving us the key to events of so much consequence, the Colonel interceded with the best effect to remedy his situation. After a few days he felt himself sufficiently recovered to continue his narrative, which he seemed inclined to do. He might, perhaps, have reflected on his past life ; for his self-satisfied countenance had changed very much, and his high-toned speech was lowered, although every now and then he displayed his savage disposition ; and on that account it was very difficult for us to judge of his true character. From his appearance, I supposed he was influenced by the effects of returning sensibility, though he endeavoured all in his power to suppress it. The remainder of his story is as follows : —

History of the Armenian continued.

“ I have related to you, as sincerely as any biographer can do of himself, that which will give you an idea of my character. The period until my thirty-second year (which indeed contains so much that I could fill up several folio volumes) I shall run through very briefly: it includes nothing that concerns your history, nor does it cause in me such dreadful reflections as the subsequent days of my life. In this space of time, I endeavoured to obtain that which was necessarily wanting on account of my youth. I studied with infinite assiduity the knowledge of mankind, which was easily obtained from the multitude of events that constantly occurred to assist me in my speculations. During that time I travelled through all Europe, and a part of Asia and Africa. I also procured partisans at several courts. With their assistance, I played my tricks in every department in which they were concerned. This flattered my ambition, which aimed at nothing less than to be governor of some state.’

“ And was that really your expectation ? ” interrupted the Prince, hastily.

“ Yes ; and I should certainly have accomplished my aim,” answered he, “ if I could have remained undiscovered one quarter of a year longer.”

“ One would think it almost impossible, that an idea so extravagantly absurd should have entered your mind ; and yet you endeavoured to carry it into effect, notwithstanding all the difficulties that surrounded you ! But how was it possible for you to procure such partisans in the cabinets of the great, upon whose influence you could depend ? — Are not persons of integrity elected to such employments ; men who are proof against corruption ? ”

“ Oh ! Prince, if other people doubted the possibility of accomplishing a purpose, I reckoned with the greatest certainty upon its attainment. I frequently suggested to them new plans, and suddenly the work was finished. They looked at it with all the astonishment that a blind man would do upon the world, were he suddenly to be

restored to sight. No one suspected its existence, no one comprehended its design. Even those who were employed on it very often did not know what building they were constructing, when they were putting the finishing stroke to it."

"You forget yourself—you load me with new mysteries, without having unravelled the first. I should like to know by what means you succeeded in bringing the persons engaged [in the secret cabinets of the different courts you mention so entirely to your interests?"]

"To your reply, that the great only elect men of undoubted sincerity to such employments, I could, if I wished, prove to you quite the contrary; and that the greatest treacheries have already been committed by such people. But I did not want to make use of such means as they could procure me!—The method by which I enchanted them was, to indulge their passions. The miser's hands I filled with money—the frantic, I threw into enthusiasm—I painted before the fancy of the ambitious the satisfaction of his wishes—those that sought revenge I assisted in fulfilling their desires—and the voluptuous became my foil. Oh! you will scarcely believe what unbounded influence I often obtained with the most conscientious, by procuring them a pair of blue languishing eyes, or by the assistance of a pretended virgin—according as the taste of my subjects required.—There was not one in whom I did not discover a weak side, by which I could guide him at my pleasure; and sovereigns very often listened to my inventions. I tell you this last for your own tranquillity, my Prince; as it proves that others were in a similar situation with yourself."

"No more of this—your answer is not satisfactory; I wish rather to draw new questions from it. From whence did you, in the first place, acquire all those large sums, which were necessary, as you said yourself, to feed avaricious men?—You could not possibly acquire sufficient by gaming to do that, and support at the same time the pageantry which you were obliged to display?"

"That I could not forward all my plans by gaming, I own, though I acquired large sums by it. But having

adopted a title to my own fancy, it procured me easy access to the best of company; I resorted likewise to a variety of other methods; I forged handwritings, and manufactured false bank-notes; and by that means I carried on a genteel roguish trade. I will relate but one of my tricks to you, to convince you of the possibility of this.

“ At ——n, whither I travelled for the purpose of procuring sixty thousand dollars, which I wanted for the corruption of a minister of the court of ——, I gave myself out for the Duke of ——.— This Prince was, as I knew for certain, upon his travels, and residing at that time in —— incognito. This lucky accident was assisted by his resembling me very much in his person; and what was wanting I easily supplied by art. The conversation which I had with him, whilst on a visit at his court, enabled me without any difficulty to imitate his gestures, and other peculiarities that were characteristical. I also clothed my servants with the same livery as his. Very little prudence was then required to manage the rest. Who would have mistrusted me? For to make the deception complete, I wrote false letters for the Duke, and sent them several days before my arrival there, which obtained for me a good reception. I soon perceived that they thought it a great honour to furnish me with jewels, and supply me with great sums of money. So fortunate a circumstance soon raised me to a state of affluence.”

“ Incredible audacity! But were you not afraid of being discovered?”

“ Not in the least. Even those who had seen the Duke were deceived; and my extraordinary assurance was of great assistance to me. The real Duke, too, was at a sufficient distance from me not to discover the plot. Besides that, I did not give out directly that I was the Duke himself; but only made use of such favourable circumstances as would induce them to believe me to be him. I gave myself out for the Count Sta——. This was the name under which the real Duke travelled: and they whispered to one another, that they were certain it was the Duke ——; but they did not choose to call me so to my

face, because it was known that I travelled secretly, and that I did not stay in a place where I was known. Suppose, for instance, I suspected any one of treachery, it was very easy for me to change my appearance, and to make myself entirely unknown, which I could readily perform. In your own history you will find examples of it, which I omit here, to avoid being too circumstantial. As soon as I had collected my treasure, I took a journey into the country, under the pretext of paying a visit to one of my acquaintances. Having penetrated some way into the forest I was obliged to pass through, all about me was immediately changed; for every thing was prepared for that purpose. My carriage became of another form; my horses were changed from bays to black; one of my servants sat by my side as my wife; the others were entirely metamorphosed; and I exchanged my title for that of major. It was impossible for any one to know me again! For appearance' sake, I left several of my servants, and some large boxes, behind. They indeed knew not who I was, for I took them a few days before, for that purpose, into my service; and the trunks contained nothing of any value, by which the good landlord could satisfy himself for my account: they were all filled up with earth and stones."

"That is vile!—But could you always trust your footmen, who were acquainted with your tricks, and were obliged to act their part in them?—Were you not afraid of being betrayed by them?"

"They were all so much involved in my interest, that they feared the discovery as much as I did. And, besides, I had only cunning people in my service, such as understood the mere movement of my eyeballs, and who, before I engaged them, had been accustomed to deceit and rascality. It was a long while before I could muster a tribe; to whom I could intrust the execution of my schemes; and for that reason I sent those into the other world that I suspected. They enjoyed the best life that people of that description could wish for! They had a superfluity of every thing. I very seldom troubled them with any business; but when I did, it was of such a nature that they executed it willingly, for it cost them neither trouble

nor drops of sweat. And as they could display great characters, mountebank tricks, and wonders, they were sure of not being discovered; as they told me, that by those means they contrived to have themselves held in the highest respect. Believe me, Prince, those people were very much attached to me, punctually fulfilled my smallest commands, and feared me so much that I am not able to describe it. An angry look from me made them tremble; and I ascribe this extraordinary fear to my deceptions, which I sometimes displayed before them; to instil into them the idea, that supernatural powers were at my command."

"But how easily might those people, whom you yourself call so cunning and artful, have experienced the contrary, if they had reflected, that you made use of them as instruments in the execution of your plans, when your influence with supernatural powers would have been sufficient?"

"This is a just observation. But consider for a moment, what an effect the miraculous produces, if it is skilfully managed. It is but natural to expect great things from him, whom we once have seen perform a miracle; at least we do not doubt the want of ability, but conclude, that he begins and ceases at pleasure. But you must consider that I only gave my people inconsiderable characters to play; the capital part I performed myself; and they always found something extraordinary in their part, though they assisted me individually to finish the whole."

"I must confess, that you always acted with the greatest precaution. But I must go back to my former questions, one of which only you have answered to my satisfaction, namely, the way you got the large sum of money to defray the expenses of your plans. How you pleased the fanatic, and how you satisfied the revengeful and voluptuous, I can easily imagine; but what could the ambitious expect of you, as you could not dispose of titles, or lucrative employments?"

"Very much, Prince; for before I applied to any one, and previous to my becoming closely connected with a person, (for I avoided carefully the appearance of seeking their friendship, and always contrived it so that they

sought for my acquaintance first,) I gave those persons such proofs of my power, that they were easily led to expect much from the connection. And we find no great difficulty in crediting every thing that tends to promote the accomplishment of our wishes. Extraordinary as it may seem, they sometimes obtained from me what I promised, though the difficulties that presented themselves were unbounded. It was not my intention to be so circumstantial in my account of this period of my life, but only to point out the consequences which were produced by my actions; — but I read it in your countenance, Prince, that you will not be satisfied with it; and I begin on that account the history of another part of my life, which of itself would make me notorious; though it ought to be thrown in the back ground, when compared with that which follows.

“ The court of —, which at that time took part in every war, and at the conclusion of it prescribed the conditions of peace, seemed to nourish some creatures, who would become useful to me, as soon as I wanted their assistance: with that view I travelled there. To discover those that could be at all useful to me in the execution of my plans, was my first endeavour. I had not long to seek for them; they soon presented themselves to me. These were the two first secretaries. Through their hands passed the most important matters that concerned the government. They were the oracles of the ministers, who troubled themselves with no other part of the business, than that of agreeing to the plans proposed to them by their secretaries, and, if requisite, signing their names; although fame sounded their praise, and extolled their wisdom. In short, the first ministers, who had no other merit than that of having sprung from ancient families, were decorated with the ribands, and enjoyed the titles, whilst the secretaries performed the labour. You are astonished; but it is really the fact, though few had a knowledge of it; for the honourable and learned private counsellor, baron — had a pension on account of his old age, which rendered him no longer capable, notwithstanding his great abilities, of transacting any business for the state. Those who were in office had only to thank one person for their situation, who

did not regard their being adequate to the station they filled ; but only, whether they had handsome features, and were well made. Some I must except ; but they were either ambassadors, or had little influence in the cabinet. All the principal business fell upon the two secretaries ; and through them alone the court obtained and augmented that dignity which the before-mentioned baron —— had procured.

“ It is incredible, what two men can perform, when placed in such a situation, if they act together. One passionately loved the lady ——, the only daughter of the conference minister ; and the other aimed at a lucrative sinecure. But as both their designs were thwarted, they, for that reason, became sincerely attached to each other. They were of plebeian birth ; and neither the lady nor the elevated situation could possibly be obtained for them, according to the arrangement. Their superiors would not suffer them to be too powerful, for fear it should depreciate their own authority. Those two men laboured with great industry, and yet neither of them could advance a step farther in the attainment of his object. The first secretary L——, who was in love with the lady, thought of gaining her heart by his great merits and talents, and he was not entirely mistaken ; for she valued superior abilities more than high birth. But how could she be aware that he was so accomplished a character, when all that he performed was attributed to the account of another ! and the laws of etiquette hindered him from forming any other acquaintance with her, than that which some stolen looks procured him. He did not imagine, though the lady loved him sincerely, that she dared give him her hand ; as she reckoned eighteen degrees of nobility ! A dreadful idea, to connect eighteen degrees of birth with a plebeian of merit ! — yet he did not despair.

“ The other secretary, D——, had for many years faithfully exerted himself in his situation ; he undertook the most important business, and accomplished it with credit ; but he was continually disappointed, for all the vacant situations were given to strangers. They both had daily business together ; and their bad fortune and repeated disap-

pointments were the subject of conversation, and the cause of a very intimate friendship ; which is, in such circumstances, very rare : for we generally wish to surpass each other, and instead of expressing real friendship, exhibit masks of hypocrisy. They justly considered, that, if there were a possibility to arrive at the summit of their wishes, it could only be brought about by their being united. And this at length happened. L—— sought every opportunity to praise the talents of D—— to his superior, and was only satisfied when D—— (who was in great favour with the lady's father) spoke a good word in his behalf, on account of his beloved.

“ Both were very near gaining their aim. L—— was beloved by his girl ; and elevated with the idea, supposed, like lovers in general, that things might easily be settled after their union. D—— also was on the point of obtaining an eligible situation as a counsellor, with the prospect of procuring a still better employment ; when, behold, all suddenly fell to the ground.—And who brought this event about ? It was I. I destroyed their plans, in order that I might restore them again to happiness, when it should seem to them totally impossible. I could then with the greater certainty rely upon their gratitude for my generosity.

“ Observe how I undertook that difficult task, and how I persevered in it !

“ Into the house of the lady's father I had long before acquired access. I assumed the character of an Italian baron, by name *Vatifiello*, and gaming, which he was fond of, procured me a ready admittance to his table. To increase his esteem, I made use of no other method, than to let him always be successful when we played. He was weak enough not to see through this manœuvre ; and I, with a most cheerful countenance, submitted to every thing that he proposed. We were, when his business permitted, always together. I therefore became, in a great measure, necessary to promote his comfort. At his house I also contracted an intimacy with both the secretaries ; and L—— must acknowledge himself beholden to me for engaging the attention of the father, purposely, that he might entertain himself undisturbed with his beloved. This seemed to be

the time for blowing up the mine, which I had so artfully constructed. It was necessary to render the courtship of the secretary with the old gentleman's daughter suspicious, without his being able to guess at my intentions. This was admirably effected. The poor young lady very soon received positive orders from her father to avoid the company of the secretary. She now could only weep in the solitude of her chamber over her misfortunes. L—— was received coolly when he came to the house; and too soon perceived the cause from which this treatment originated. He therefore discontinued his visits, and sought in vain to recover his lost repose in the silent path of retirement, where nought could disturb him in the hallowed pleasure of pouring forth the sorrows of his soul. Believe not, Prince, that this is an addition of my own: no; the poor fellow had, indeed, loved so passionately, that he was almost driven to madness, and could not apply any longer to business.

“D—— did not obtain the promised situation, but was thrown into prison, because a document of consequence was missing which had been put into his hands. He was suspected of having sent it treacherously to a foreign court. Reflect, my Prince, how this circumstance must have operated upon the mind of poor L——; for he justly feared he should be involved in D——'s affair. This would indeed have happened, had I not suspected, that if I any longer delayed unravelling the business, it might in the end become a task of great difficulty, or, at least, ultimately deprive me of what I expected to arise from my scheme. On that account I hastened to accomplish all I had undertaken. I pursued the steps of poor L——, in one of his solitary walks. For some time I could discover no traces of him. I ascended the steeps, and penetrated into the deepest part of the wood, at several points, before I found him. I was on the point of giving up the search, when I fortunately perceived him. For the situation of his mind, he could not have chosen a more convenient spot than that where I found him. Before his feet a silver stream glided silently along, supplied by a torrent that rose among the scattered shrub-crowned rocks, that ornamented the opposite shore, and in which were formed a variety of beautiful grottos. Over it there was a

shelving precipice, which almost reached the bank on which he was sitting. It was barren, and produced only here and there a few little shrubs and moss. From the middle of it there issued a rivulet, which with pleasing murmurs united itself with the stream of the river. The sun still gilded with his setting beams the summits of the rocks; and impatiently the pale moon seemed to wait for the period, when she should resume the government, and shed her faint light on the rippling waves. The ravenous night-birds had left their haunts, and were wandering with hideous cries in search of prey. He was sitting upon the stump of a tree covered with moss. His head was placed on his hand, and he apparently struggled with some horrid resolution. In his right hand he held a writing tablet. I silently drew nearer to him, and beheld the following words inscribed upon it:

“ ‘ Not to the dregs is the cup of sorrow emptied, which was filled up to the brim. No: it falls from my hand.— Behind me — all is irrecoverably lost; before me — impenetrable darkness; within me — despair. No other path which leads from this labyrinth of innumerable sufferings, than through the gates of death. — Oh! come then, come! welcome friend! — Thy broken hour-glass is no frightful picture; thy horrible face seems to me the sweet smiling of a bride before the altar; the voice of the destroyer sounds more charming to me than the most beautiful music on the long wished nuptial day. — Oh! come then, and bring me, weary of life, to the vaults of rest. — Thou comest not?— Then I will hasten to thee, who hast thy habitation in every element, to whom every moment of our lives brings us nearer. In these waves, my beloved, I seek a period to my sorrows, because my affection for thee is unconquerable. My last breath will be employed in calling upon thy name; and it will be first repeated, when my tongue shall resume its powers again, roused by a sound which will penetrate even into the most profound depths.’ ”

“ He started hastily up, lifting his clasped hands towards heaven. — ‘ Thou, O eternal God!’ he exclaimed, ‘ wilt forgive me; for thou art gracious, and I am thy creature! My beloved Concordia!’ — He rushed, after uttering

these words, precipitately towards the river ; but I caught him in my arms. The fright, which my sudden appearance occasioned, threw him almost into a swoon ; but he soon recovered, and remained speechless for some time, staring at me with great earnestness. I thought it best not to interrupt him ; but to wait, and to discover what would be the effect of such a sudden shock to his whole frame. ‘ I know not,’ said he at length, ‘ whether I should thank you, or curse the moment in which it came into your mind to visit this desert and frustrate my attempts, whilst I was willing to break the chain of my sufferings, which is become too heavy for me.’ ‘ When you know of what consequence it will be to you, then you will thank me.’ ‘ The gift of a joyless life. — For that must I thank you ?’ ‘ You *will* thank me.’ ‘ Incomprehensible ! — Can we thank him, who, when we are seeking for a thing with anxiety, returns us that which we threw away ?’ — ‘ But if the thing were a diamond, which we had falsely imagined a worthless stone, how then ?’

“ ‘ I do not find myself in that situation. I was willing to throw aside a distressing burden, which you have again imposed upon me against my inclination.’ ‘ A distressing burden ? — Is it possible that life can be despised by him who sees himself on the point of obtaining the object of his wishes ? — Impetuous man ! What joy, what happiness still awaits you ; of all of which you would have deprived yourself, if I had not prevented your accomplishing the dreadful act of suicide.’ ‘ The object of my wishes near me ? Happiness still awaits me ! — Cruel sport ! And this from you, who are acquainted with my whole history ?’ ‘ You are near the object of your wishes ! — I am not sporting with your feelings. I have spoken the truth. But I had almost forgotten, that mortals, when hurried to despair, are devoid of reflection.’ ‘ And are not you a man ? Do you not feel the force of hope, the galling pangs of desire ? Does not inability remind you of your gross matter, when you would exert your faculties beyond their limits, and endeavour to fly to the boundaries of the atmosphere ?’ ‘ These are questions which your own shame will unravel to you.’ ‘ Did I not see you frequently, and with passion, play with

the father of my beloved ?' ' Did I play with passion ?' ' Is there left any other presumption, when we observe, that it becomes the daily business of a man ?' ' Short-sighted mortal ! — Not to trust me farther ! — But I pardon you : however, mark this rule : if you see a wise man, according to your sentiments, act weakly or improperly, admit that he perhaps does it merely on account of its good consequences ; for he acts like a prudent botanist, nourishes noxious and poisonous plants, in order that he may extract from them an efficacious fluid.' ' But, what do you want with me ?'

" ' To make you happy. Listen to me without interruption, and answer merely my questions. — You were about to cut, with your own hand, the thread of your life, because you thought yourself unhappy, whilst you met with obstacles to your love !' ' Obstacles which were insurmountable ; to remove which I employed all my powers, but I exerted them in vain. And is not this sufficient to make me unhappy ? Is not the largest and most magnificent building overthrown, when we sap the foundation on which it is supported ? And the history of my friend, will not that also add to my miseries ? Is it possible for me to escape the dangerous gulf into which he has fallen ? Will not my grief, on seeing an intimate friend in distress, sooner than make my innocence appear, render it more suspicious ? — Leave me, or it will drive me to distraction, to find that a man can be witness to all this, and yet remain indifferent.'

" ' I have heard you with patience. Your words are those of a man overpowered with calamities. If you had listened to me coolly, you would have been able to explain to yourself my unconcern, which seemed to you so much to deserve censure and reproof ; but which arises merely from a conviction, that I can restore to you that which you think irrecoverably lost !' — ' You ! you restore me that again ! Alas ! how willingly would I believe your words if I were able !' — ' Well, then, acknowledge your incredulity, and be convinced of the fact !'

" ' We arrived, during our discourse, before a coal-hut, sequestered amidst thick bushes, and by which a little rivulet ran ; I conducted his steps to the door, almost without his knowledge. His beloved Concordia flew out of the hut

into his arms. I can now, with reason, expect the question from you, my Prince, how the lady came there?—It was by my contrivance that this was effected. On what a good footing I stood with the lady's father you know already; and his opinion of me was increased, when he saw that my sentiments coincided with his, namely, that the love of his daughter must remain hopeless, because it was fixed upon a man, who, if even he had the merit of being learned, would, in spite of that, be a disgrace to his ancient family. He charged me, for that reason, to explain to his daughter this truth, and I was very willing to perform that task. Daily I conversed with the poor Concordia in secret, and I made use of every opportunity to make her more and more attached to her beloved; insomuch, that she at last promised me to venture every thing for him, rather than to lose him. On his account she disregarded the inheritance and ancient family of her father. As I had also contrived to render abortive all the attempts of her beloved to speak to her, or to send her a letter, she impaired her health by incessant anxiety; and it was found advisable to procure her a physician. He advised, as I had suspected, frequent airings in a coach, and as soon as her strength would permit, to walk frequently. I was obliged to accompany her; and in one of our walks, I discovered the coal-hut, and proposed it as a place of ambush for her, because they would be the least likely to find her in such a situation; and in the mean time we could arrange the business. She consented to my proposal, and flew thither, according to my advice, on a certain day, when her father was absent from home.

“In the mean time I sought for her lover. I fortunately found him not far distant from the very spot, and brought him near to the hut, where, by the sudden appearance of his beloved, and the recollection of what I had before told him, I made an impression upon his mind that could never be effaced. Every word that he spoke evinced how deeply he felt his sorrows. Their embraces lasted for a long time in the hut, which I observed from without, through a chink; then L—— rushed out, and threw himself at my feet. ‘Pardon me,’ exclaimed he, ‘pardon me, that I did not believe your words.—But how could I expect

this from you, when I thought myself abandoned by every one?’ I raised him up. ‘Have I kept my word?’ said I, smiling. ‘Have I fulfilled my promise?’ ‘Oh! magnanimous, noble man, forgive me!’ ‘Is your life still indifferent to you?’ ‘That you saved it, this angel shall thank you.’ He brought forth Concordia, who, not recovered from the effects of her ecstasy, was still weeping for joy.

“A scene now ensued, which, if any thing could have operated upon my sensibility, would have had the desired effect. I saw two souls, elevated to the height of happiness by my exertions, who idolized me with speechless affection and gratitude. I partook of their joy, and was thus more than rewarded for my trouble. As soon as the first intoxication of delight had subsided, the lady began to express much anxiety and fear (so natural to virtuous women) for having ventured on such a perilous undertaking. I stood near them, and listened to all they said. They then reflected upon many things which could not previously have been thought of. The young lady, who had conquered so heroically her attachment to her country, her love to her father, and her regard to his wealth, was now troubled with the thought, whilst she held her beloved object in her arms, whither they should fly, and whence they should derive subsistence; for she recollected with sorrow, that she had not taken with her, in her great haste, either money — or diamonds.

“‘And will,’ exclaimed L——, ‘our generous friend, to whose kindness and exertions we owe all our happiness, will he leave unfinished the work he has begun?’ — ‘Certainly not,’ said she, whilst she turned herself to me, and seized my hand, which she pressed suddenly to her lips; and every little cloud, which was before visible upon her countenance, disappeared immediately. ‘At the idea, the most horrid which could influence my mind, that my beloved could again be torn from me, I forgot, for some moments, that you were our protector, and would provide for us. Pardon the weak, the anxious maiden, who has placed such confidence in you.’

“I could easily imagine, that in this uncommon confidence placed in me, which had now occupied the souls of

this couple, fancy would do much; and I only waited to see this manifested, when I represented to them, in its most striking point of view, what they might expect from me, if that which seemed to them an impossibility had been brought about by my management. 'It is right,' I began, 'for you to trust me; and you have reason to expect more good fortune from him, who can give you more than even your most sanguine wishes would lead you to expect. This very day (for day began already to break), and before the moon rises again, you both shall be joined in wedlock by the hand of the priest, and pass in happiness through this transitory state; united, by the consent of your father, my dear lady, who will give you, moreover, his paternal blessing to increase your bliss. To-day, also, before the sun shines in his meridian splendour, shall D—— be liberated from his imprisonment, and replaced in his situation with dignity and honour — and (turning to L——) which also waits for you. — I go to accomplish what I now promise: till I return, I request you to continue in this cottage.'

"I left them in great astonishment, and flew, as hastily as possible, through the bushes, so that they believed (as they afterwards confessed to me) I had disappeared like a spirit; and I took care to favour the idea. I hastened to the residence of the lady's father, and immediately presented myself before him. He was sitting melancholy upon a sofa; being much alarmed by the flight of his daughter. All who had been sent after her, had come back without having been able to discover the place of her retreat. He reprobated his own obduracy in the most violent terms. Under the mask of a comforter, I was about going to acquaint him with what might probably happen; but he would not at that moment listen to my proposals; for he still spurned the thought of procuring the return of his daughter by giving her hand to a plebeian. I tried every method I could invent to induce him to abandon his prejudices; but before I could obtain my end, there came an officer with several soldiers to take up the minister as a state prisoner. He immediately intreated me, in the humblest manner, to accompany him to his sovereign, who expected me, and had every where enquired for me. I

followed him readily, as I had foreseen this ; for it was a part of my plan. From the manner in which the king received me, I could easily judge that he had a high esteem for me. He related to me that D——'s servant had absconded the foregoing night, and left a letter behind him, which was shown me. It was to this purpose : —

“ ‘ SIR, — The secretary D—— is innocent. The document which is wanting, I stole from him clandestinely, in the most roguish manner, and sold it to the minister —— for a large sum of money ; the greater part of which will be found in my trunk, as I cannot load myself with the wages of treachery. Repentance and anxiety persecute me every where. They seduced me to accomplish that wicked action ; and I confess with horror, that it was accursed avarice alone which prevented my discovering the villany of such an infamous transaction, till the baron Vatifello last night appeared suddenly in my chamber, and warned me of the consequences. God only knows from whence he could have got intelligence of it. He must be omniscient ! — You may ask him ; an anxious desire to save myself will not let me remain at rest !

“ ‘ JOHN KLEINBART.’ ”

“ I read it without emotion, although the eyes of the king were fixed upon me all the time. ‘ Is this true ? ’ he asked me. I answered him by a look, whilst I assumed an air of superiority. He might have understood it, for he seemed ashamed, and thanked me for the service which I had rendered him in having preserved an innocent, useful man. After an interval of several minutes, he said, ‘ From what I have this day seen of you, you seem to me to be an uncommon man, of whom I know not how to form a correct idea ; but I believe you will be kind enough to answer me some questions. I have not forgotten, that when I enquired whether the account given in the letter were true, you seemed to be not quite satisfied. I was not induced through any suspicion to ask such a question ; but I wished merely for your confirmation of this extraordinary circumstance.’ — ‘ And I believed,’ said I, ‘ that my looks would explain this better to your majesty than many words.

'Tis the boaster only that speaks his own praise. However, put your questions.'

" 'To-day they found you at the minister's, and you knew he was a traitor to his country.' 'That he is not.' — 'But he has, however, bought the document, upon which so much depends.' 'That he has not.' 'Enigmas, and nothing but enigmas! — However, the letter?' O king! all is not gold that glitters. — The counsellor, who afterwards obtained the place which was reserved for D——, bought the document, and designed to sell it again for a large sum to the enemy, as all depends upon it in the present war. Send to him. The messengers will find the paper behind his writing desk, and they will find him lying in his bed, poisoned, as he thought it not advisable to live any longer by such iniquitous means. A letter in the right pocket of his dressing gown will unravel the mystery.'

" 'The king looked at me with astonishment, and immediately gave such orders as I recommended. The messengers soon returned, and found every thing as I had described. His surprise then arose to the highest degree; he showed so much veneration for me, that he lost the power of speech, when he attempted to address me, as I looked at him. The note the messengers found in the pocket of the counsellor's dressing gown, was as follows:

" 'The baron Vatifello appeared to me last night, though my door was locked. How this was possible for him, I cannot comprehend, and still tremble to reflect upon it. He knows all about the document. He has commanded me to discover it; he has, however, permitted me to do it by a letter, which I shall leave behind me, and to fly, if I wish to become better, and that I will now do! Their cursed money I leave behind me! In my letter I have accused the minister —— of the crime; this was done that I might not break the oath which I have sworn, that I would not betray you. But if your conscience will not induce you to liberate an innocent man, who suffers for you, the baron will do it. Good God, what a man must he be, who can discover such hidden secrets! Save yourself if you can, but rescue your conscience from pain, and leave behind you such evidence as will prove the minister

an innocent man. I know not how to remove my painful anxiety. Alas! if I were but in security! You alone are the cause of my misfortune, with your cursed money and your artful persuasions. I, who had such a good master, became his betrayer! Oh! that I were able to describe to you the hell which burns in my bosom! God will assist me! Save yourself, or at least your soul. I can write no more, I must be gone.

“ ‘ JOHN KLEINBART.’ ”

“ Secretary D—— and the minister immediately obtained their liberty, and thanked me in the presence of the monarch, who had attended with much emotion these circumstances. He entreated me very much to stay with him, and be his friend and counsellor in the administration of state affairs; but I refused it. My ambition would have been flattered by it, I acknowledge; but in such a situation I could not pursue the system I had adopted, and my prospects being infinitely superior to that of being a royal favourite, I made the following answer to his request:—

“ ‘ Your kingdom, my sovereign, is populous and extensive, but the other empires in the world are of equal magnitude. All of them have a demand upon me. Every where they need my powerful services. I dare not give you and your country that which I have taken from others. To be your favourite, or even vice-governor, would be limiting my power to too small a circle. I cannot now give a farther explanation of my conduct. Indeed, if I were to endeavour to do so, you would not comprehend me. Do not press me to do that which I must refuse. If you will honour my memory, then follow my example: save innocence from oppression or seduction wherever you can, and make men happy who deserve it. I will at present give you an opportunity for so doing. Both your secretaries, L—— and D——, are the most deserving men in your court. You have hitherto known them too little. Follow my advice. You will find in them men who deserve your patronage, and who will serve you with fidelity. As soon as they are able, I will let you know it. For the present,

let them both be your private counsellors. L—— loves the daughter of the minister ; command the hard-hearted father to give him his daughter's hand. They are destined for each other ; their marriage is concluded in heaven : for that reason, neither rank nor power shall separate them !'

" The king willingly consented to all, and the minister was too prudent a courtier not to be guided by the voice of his sovereign rather than his own opinion. It was impossible for him to meet with a better fortune for his daughter, when he saw L—— was the king's favourite as well as mine, and contemplated the honourable employments which his son-in-law would arrive at. It was then very easy for the king to complete the happiness of the father, by giving L—— a diploma for the number of petty degrees which he had required. He reflected, however, that his daughter and L—— were gone, and he bewailed his loss to the king. ' Do not question me concerning them,' I interrupted him, ' my actions are secret, they are impenetrable to men ; very often they seem contradictory, and I am covered with the dark veil of mystery. In a short time both will be here.'—' My daughter here !' exclaimed the minister, ' my daughter !' I made no reply, but threw myself into my coach, which was ready for me, and soon arrived at the hut, where I met the lovers. I say nothing of their ecstasy, when I delivered to them the unexpected news. My seriousness alone deterred them from pressing me to death, out of love and veneration ; and immediately upon my arrival with them in the king's saloon, a priest gave them the matrimonial benediction.

" Tell me yourself, Prince, had I not reason to expect fidelity and gratitude for such an act of generosity ? Purposely had I conducted the business so, that their future happiness must depend upon me ; and they were, for that reason, obliged to endeavour to secure a continuance of my favour. Did I not also show myself to them in such a manner, that they must think me the most perfect and best of mankind, from whom nothing could be expected but acts of goodness ? You must have observed how firmly even the king believed every thing ; and what, in cases of exi-

gency might I not hope from him, who saw that my conduct was quite disinterested, being merely careful for the welfare of others? And to enforce these impressions so much the more, I absented myself suddenly from ——d—— without the knowledge of any person; and that they might not discover any trace of me, I went off in a dress in which nobody had seen me before, in order to make the people believe (which really happened) I had disappeared.

“And now hear, in what a natural manner I worked all those seeming wonders. One of my people had, before I arrived at ——d——, been engaged in the service of secretary D——, and thus, by him, I obtained a knowledge of all before-hand. He was the pretended John Kleinbart. Pursuant to my command he stole the document, which was not difficult for a man like him. I was obliged to have a person to hire him for that purpose, and he could not remain alive, because he could have proved his innocence by discovering the fact. Nobody was more fit for that than the counsellor. John had a love-intrigue with his female cook, and was often in the house when the counsellor was absent. I made use of this favourable circumstance. It was very easy for John to put the document, the evening before, behind the writing-desk, and to convey the letter, written by me, into the pocket of the counsellor’s dressing gown. And, in order to kill him, nothing more was requisite than to put a powder into the drink he was accustomed to take before he went to bed, and which stood ready prepared for him against he came home. The reason why I acted in the manner described, and caused the minister to be suspected, you will, without asking me, very easily perceive; for those were the only proper means to display my powers. All the purposes which I wished to accomplish, will now be manifest: so clearly will they appear, that I may now be entirely silent. Nor need you ask me, in future, how it was possible for me to attach indissolubly to my interest, the best and most prudent men, and afterwards to persuade them to do any thing that I wished.

“And now, I am approaching that period, when, as I before said, my views were guided by a settled plan. What

I had hitherto accomplished was (except acquiring an acquaintance with several courts, and a degree of influence in them) often nothing more than a continual chain of deceptions, by which I endeavoured to gain creatures, and to acquire credit in their eyes. I too soon perceived that my absence from any place very soon effaced the impression which I had left there. To my terror did I discover, that the ties of gratitude for certain services I had rendered, which I thought had united so many to my interest, were not so strong as I had reason to expect, as soon as the evident advantages which I had procured for them ceased. I must, however, here except my creatures in ———d———. There every circumstance had been favourable to me. They could never discover in my actions any thing more than the noblest and most virtuous design that ever entered the mind of men, who never wished any thing contrary to their duty, and who were unacquainted with all my shameful expedients. But how seldom was I so fortunate! I was often obliged to appear despicable to them, when they saw their criminal plans brought to a conclusion by my means, and they hated me, though they did not show it openly, perhaps from fear.

“ From my own experience, alas! I learnt that a villain is not loved by his fellow; and that those ties which bind the hearts of others with such firm affection, are to them unknown. What causes them to unite together? What renders them inseparable from one another? What makes one submissive to the other? Nothing more, than self-interest. If this should be once satisfied, all bonds would break, and each would, with indifference, see the downfall of his companion, and rejoice if he could derive a profit from it. That a profligate man can respect those virtues which he despises, I know from my own example, although I carefully stifled every impulse towards it; but that those who pursue a system of immorality cannot love the man who follows the same path, and adopts the same principles, was incomprehensible to me. I said it was always incomprehensible to me. Now, alas, I see too late the true value of virtue, which I once considered as imaginary: virtue, which alone can make us happy; which alone can fill the heart of an-

other with love for us ; which—oh ! I never knew what real joy was since iniquity enslaved me.—How can an abandoned wretch enjoy happiness ? — It is virtue alone that influences the heart to revere her tender sentiments. I once had delighted in the contemplation of her charms, but knowing my depravity, she abandoned me.—Ah ! I have loved, Prince, I have loved ; but I soon found that the enchanting pleasures of this passion were only to be possessed by untainted souls ; they were too pure for mine. Without remorse I sacrificed the happiness of an angel, and smiled with triumph at her sorrows. She followed me in all my wanderings, clung to my knees, entreated, prayed, wept at my feet, and I with indifference plunged a dagger into her breast, and destroyed at once the hopes of our embraces ! But away with it ! away with it ! I cannot think ; of what use is repentance ? ”

Narrative of the Count O—— resumed.

Mercy is so peculiarly the property of tender minds, that we were deceiving ourselves in causing this Armenian, the most detestable of wretches, to partake of its blessing. We beheld his repentance, and our eyes overflowed with tears of affliction for his conduct. We forgot ourselves so much, as to endeavour to comfort him by religion, and made use of every argument in some measure to soothe him. His apparent attention encouraged us, and we collected every thing which could contribute to our purpose. We wished to insist upon his forbearance for the sake of virtue, but he burst out into a most horrid laugh, and bit his chains. The imprecations against religion, and every thing sacred, which flowed from his livid lips, evidently showed how strongly he felt the want of them ; and how much all consolation arising from them increased his despair. — All this made a strong impression upon the Prince. As soon as the Armenian was conducted away, which was immediately, he fell upon his knees, and returned thanks to God, for having ordained every thing in such a manner, that it convinced him what a treasure his religion was, which he had wished to reject in exchange for the

wretched principles of scepticism. But his prayer did not inspire him with that cheerfulness, which alone can give strength to an innocent and suffering soul. His eyes seemed to betray a confession of offences, which he had been guilty of, to which his former irreligiousness had led him, and an anxious melancholy clouded his brow, and riveted his eyes to the ground.

Suffer not thyself, O man ! who art 'reading' this, when, perhaps, my bones, reduced to dust, are quietly reposing in the bosom of the earth, till the great day of the resurrection, — suffer not thyself to be robbed of thy religion, thy greatest treasure, which will lead thee through the world in security. Consider him who would snatch it from thee as an enemy who wishes to murder thy rest, and flee from him. Trust not alone to the light of reason, which thy beneficent Creator hath awarded thee, that thou mightest be able to distinguish the good from the bad, and pursue the straightest way to virtue. Since he is the God of truth, trust in him. Do not give thyself up entirely to thy own judgment ; for how soon mayest thou err ! Learn this from the example of the unfortunate Prince. He became, from an arrogant reliance upon his reason, and an unbounded confidence in his own abilities, so indescribably miserable, that his former tranquillity and cheerfulness never returned. Impress this truth, O Christian ! strongly upon thy mind, *that religion alone can lead us securely through the valley of death.* By it is the grave deprived of all its terrors — by it does death become a friend, who opens for us the door of eternal happiness. Without it every thing vanishes into darkness and desolation, we are seized with terror and dismay. Religion alone can make the beneficent gift of reason, that image of the Deity, a blessing to us. He who hopes to be happy, and rests securely without religion, resembles a traveller, who perversely quits the direct road, where guides would prevent his foot from erring, and by following the path which he himself has chosen, is lost in an impassable country, where his cries cannot reach the ear of a deliverer, and thus he at length irretrievably sinks into an unforeseen abyss.

Had I not been previously convinced of these truths, I should have been so now from the sight of the Armenian.

Oh! that all men, who are about to adopt erroneous opinions, had been present when the Armenian spoke. They must have been captivated by religion, and her daughter virtue, and inspired with the warmest attachment to them. Nothing, probably, ever placed their loveliness, and the certainty with which they reward their adherents, in so strong a light as the conduct of this Armenian, whose words alone I cannot relate without shuddering with horror. When the Armenian was brought, the following day, to the Prince, he was in the same disposition as before. Not the least trace, by which one might judge of what had happened, was perceivable.

History of the Armenian continued.

“ The coolness towards me, which I observed in so many of my companions, as soon as they perceived I could no longer assist them, induced me to contrive a method which attached them to me more firmly, and united them in my own interest. Such a method I very easily discovered. At that time the order of —— stood in very high esteem, and contained members of every rank, religion, and manner of thinking. That members of every persuasion could adhere so closely to this order, naturally led me to conclude, that every one either must derive advantage from it, though this seemed incredible, or that the retreat from it might be dangerous. Both these effects I designed at times to turn to my advantage, and without further hesitation I became a member.

“ The fundamental principle of this order was to augment the number of members as much as possible, and by that means to obtain a great influence in all external departments, and even to procure the direction in some. Only the superiors were acquainted with this, and it was difficult to obtain their degree. Every one of the undergraduate members represented to himself a different object to this superior degree, according to his individual situation, and as his manner of thinking induced him. A solemn oath was required, binding them not to divulge a syllable of what related to the order; and every member of it was consoled by the thought, that he had made a progress

farther than another, without communicating it to his brother. A general equality of sentiment being introduced, nobody considered that he was a mere instrument in the hands of others ; and this equality was alone sufficient to attract the plebeian, when he thought himself in this society united with many great men. Figurative language and pretended wisdom, for appearance sake, veiled in symbols and characters pleased the fanatic, who wished anxiously to pass beyond the boundaries of human knowledge. Humane actions influenced the noble, and opened the hands of the rich and powerful to extensive charity, and curiosity frequently induced many persons to enter into the order.

“ The strong inclination of the greater part of mankind to a mystical union, made many desirous of joining this society, though it stood not in need of members. Their number was called a legion. To preserve them, no additional manœuvre was wanted, and their defection was prevented by many methods ; and even if that should have happened, it could not be of any material injury to the order. Unwearied with every possible endeavour and exertion, I sought to push myself forward, and I at length succeeded, and became one of the leaders. I was elected to that employment with the greatest solemnity ; and it was then that I discovered the real views of the society, which before that period were not quite clear to me. A small tablet of silver, with black letters engraved upon it, acquainted me with the motive of its institution. The contents were as follow :

“ *‘ Let the dominion of good be the object of pursuit ; and the continual endeavour to become better, be the daily labour of yourself and your brethren. Secrecy and darkness secure the good, and prevent the wicked from obstructing their proceedings.’*

“ Do not believe that this grand object, which seemed so entirely irrelevant to my principles, deprived me of my courage, although I had not expected it. My first thought was, that every thing might be conducive to my benefit by well managed proceedings. And I therefore endeavoured immediately to gain the most exalted character among my

brethren. One grand principle of the order was, to raise its members, who were known as good and useful subjects, to the highest places in the state. Nothing could be easier than this, and by such means to place every one in that department which he best understood, and was most worthy of; from which he might succeed to others by degrees, from the lowest to the highest, so that all might be governed by members of our order, which would enable us to attain our object the sooner. Twice every year the superiors met together in different places. There they communicated to each other the experience which they had acquired. The members were then proposed and examined, and they that were found fit for employments, soon obtained them.*

“As much precaution was prescribed by the laws in respect to the choice of the superiors, and as many conditions were necessary in order to obtain places of consequence, it was very soon evident to me, that I had not obtained my situation by undue influence. Many had nothing more in view than the gratification of their vanity; and under the pretence of working for the order, were satisfied with having obtained their wishes. And I perceived with pleasure, that the majority of the superiors of that order were not at all interested in promoting the virtuous; their only object was to govern. To bring them over to my side, without discovering to them my plan, was a very easy task.

“And now my game was won. Almost all places were either given away by me, or at my intercession; and I saw very soon all the places filled by people, who only waited my suggestion in order to communicate to me all which could be serviceable in accomplishing my plans. My power was now very far extended; and I [may reasonably suppose, that what I have already communicated to you, will enable you to understand me in future without further explanation, as soon as I mention that order: without it I never could have reached those situations which by its

* That people may not suspect I mean the order of masonry, I solemnly declare that it is not the case; for this still exists, while the other, by its infamous conduct, was destroyed.—NOTE OF THE COUNT O—.

means I arrived at. In the mean time the Regent —d— died. During the government of his predecessor many changes happened. From one of my associates there, I obtained the following letter in hieroglyphics :

“ ‘ The creatures of the present Regent —d— raise up their heads in grandeur. They always surround their master, and know how to please him in such a manner, that he listens to all their proposals with blind confidence. All is changed ; and merely from a national hatred, it is in contemplation to break off an alliance, of which our court was so proud till this period, and without which, we shall not long be able to avoid a bloody war. Both the prime ministers L—— and D——* are dismissed, and have been beheaded in their prisons. The haste with which this was performed, did not permit an enquiry into the crime which was imputed to them ; and the secrecy in which all is enveloped, scarcely leaves us room for conjecture. I believe that something of a serious nature was alleged against them, which irritated so much the passion of —d—, that the idea of coolly enquiring into the business did not once occur to him. The Count P——, who is now at Rome, as ambassador, has received orders to return as quickly as possible. His employment is given to another, and he has a more advantageous one. The —d—, whose heart he possesses, waits with the utmost anxiety for his arrival. He has made him his private minister, and all is in expectation on his account. The exactness and care which I observe in writing to you nothing but what is really true, and the great haste with which I proceeded to deliver all this into your hands, makes me wait with eager expectation your further commands, and it will, I flatter myself, meet your approbation.

“ ‘ CHARLES.’

“ This Charles was by birth a Frenchman, and one of my principal confidants ; his talents having fitted him for that purpose. Scarcely had I read the letter, when I

* These personages procured their appointments as ministers by the recommendation of the Armenian.—EDITOR.

threw myself into my carriage, and travelled day and night, that I might arrive speedily at Rome. I soon became acquainted with the Count P——, and found in him exactly such a man as I wished for. To bring him into the order of —— was very easy, because he was long before inclined to it. If I dare call the connection of common interest, friendship, there soon took place between us an intimate friendship. I discovered to him a part of my plan, and he swore faithfully to assist in fulfilling it, for which I promised to help him to the — d — throne ; though this was in truth not my serious intention. I need not relate to you that I magnified my influence, and by the adroitness and mystery of my words and actions which I displayed, I acquired his entire confidence. I was still in doubt which empire I should make the object of my government. Soon after I discovered circumstances that induced me to relinquish my former choice. I looked for the favourable moment that should direct my power ; and for the present, I was satisfied with augmenting the number of my partisans.

“ This favourable moment was nearer than I thought, and all my undertakings became a settled point upon which they could direct themselves. Besides the intimacy of Count P——, I had the good fortune, on account of this journey to Rome, to find again my foster-father by a curious accident, by means of which I learnt likewise the secret of my birth. His continual employment in his laboratory, and the neglect of his patients, had brought him into the most unpleasant situation. The proprietor of the house in which I resided, and who was formerly a physician, maintained him out of compassion. Chance procured us an interview. I found no difficulty in recognising him immediately, for his physiognomy was not altered, and it had made such an impression on my mind, that I should have known him among a multitude of men. On a former occasion, it was neither my intention to seek for him, nor to make myself known to him, and this was the case now ; although I saw the poor old grey-beard standing before me, who so much wanted my assistance. I exulted in the firmness of my principles, which were

not shaken even by the sight of a father ; and which suffered not my heart to indulge the least emotion of tenderness.

“ It happened that my foot slipping, I fell down a staircase ; I remained lifeless for some time, and when my senses returned again, I found myself laid in a bed, under the care of my foster-father ; besides whom nobody was present. I looked at him with surprise, and then apparently meditated upon something, the nature of which he could not discover. ‘ What has happened to me,’ I exclaimed angrily, ‘ that I find myself alone with a man from whom I ought always to fly, because he could discover the lowliness of my birth.’

“ ‘ A fall from a staircase — your fit — I assisted you — I opened your shirt collar.’ ‘ I shall recompense you for that. — Where are my people ?’ ‘ I contrived to have them absent, because —————’ ‘ And how did you dare to do it ? Let them come up immediately ; I command it. Ring the bell.’

“ His knees trembled, tears gushed from his eyes. — ‘ Do you not know me ?’ ‘ What a question ! Ring the bell !’ And in the mean time I jumped out of the bed, and was going to ring it myself. He put himself in my way.

“ ‘ For God’s sake, let me have but a few minutes. I am indeed Sylvio, and you are my Ferdinando. Are then the traces of my face become entirely strange to you ? Does your happiness and fortune not permit you to indulge the pleasing recollection and acknowledgment of your father’s love ?’ ‘ You are mad, fellow,’ I exclaimed, and pushed him from me, whilst he endeavoured to embrace me. ‘ Behold the mark on your neck ; by it were you made known to me, when I opened your shirt collar during your fit. Oh ! let me not have in vain thanked God, that he has enabled me to find you, and given me an opportunity of presenting to you your real father, who sighs for your embraces. Oh ! if there arise not in your breast any sentiments of gratitude for me, be attentive at least to your own advantage, and force not him from you, who is the only person that can relate to you the secret of your

birth, and can help you on that account to an immense fortune.' 'You were then no deceiver?' said I, in order to maintain the character which at present I ought to act. 'Oh! did not your heart tell you this immediately?—However I forgive you; who knows what deceits may have hardened it, so that——'

" 'Yes, dear father—' I pressed him to my bosom. It was by no means difficult for me to shed a few tears, when the old man mingled his with mine. 'Oh! there are villains among mankind. I have been deceived by one to whom I entirely sacrificed my friendship, and whom I charged to seek after you, because I could not, by enquiry, obtain any account of you, and my business did not permit me to undertake this agreeable journey myself. The monster! He abused my confidence, and instructed a rascal, who acted the part of my father. My childish heart was easily deceived, and I embraced him with affection. But by a lucky circumstance, I discovered that he aimed at my life and fortune, so that they might divide the spoil among them. Yet he entirely owed his existence to me! Oh! father, how difficult it is to believe always in the Almighty!——*' For by the treatment I had experienced, I was almost rendered a complete misanthrope.'

"The old man willingly believed my stories, and his eyes overflowed with tears of joy. 'Yes,' cried he in an ecstasy, 'you are my Ferdinando. The falsehood and deceit you have experienced in the world, could only give you the appearance of an enemy of human kind, but your heart remained noble. Oh! how your father will be rejoiced; for the only wish which glows in his bosom is, that he may live to see you again.' 'You were not my father!' said I, shedding a fresh stream of tears. 'Yes, I deserve now to be cast from you.' 'Not so, my son. I only was your foster-father, and that is sufficient for me, although you absconded. But enough of that, I now have you again!—Read this letter.'

* Many such expressions I have omitted. In the mouth of such a diabolical villain they seemed to me to be blasphemy.—NOTE OF COUNT O—.

“ ‘ Venice, August 6. 17 —.

“ ‘ MY DEAREST SYLVIO,

“ ‘ I have wronged you by my reproaches. I now know that you are innocent. Though I have lost my son, it was not your neglect or harshness that induced him to run away. Alas ! forgive the oppressed heart of a father, which led me to treat you rigorously. I thought I should make my son happier than his equals ; that he might shine and soar above all others ! God has punished my pride severely ; though my punishment is milder than I deserved. Oh ! that my son were still alive, and could be restored to me again ! — That thought drives far away the long-cherished idea of death, which otherwise I could embrace with pleasure. It is this alone which keeps my almost stagnant blood in motion. It is this alone which nourishes my soul. Could I but once more behold my beloved son, then would I fill his hands with immeasurable riches, with which the goodness of Heaven has blessed me, who am so unworthy, and which I preserved but for him, my only one. Could I but lay my trembling hands upon his head, to impart my blessing, and might he with gratitude close my fading eyes ; then after my death, every one would bless my name for the sake of such a son. My old feeble head, thou wilt be obliged without that consolation, without that happiness, soon to lay thy grey hairs in the grave. But Sylvio, is it the feebleness of old age or presumption ? I cannot yet give up my hope. Do not spare any trouble to find him out. Willingly I would then — Oh ! what would I not — bear all your guilt, nay, were it the greatest, I would suffer for it in your stead in purgatory.

“ ‘ MISCARINI.’

“ It was not the desire of my heart to see my father, but the idea of obtaining his fortune, and many other plans which I had already in view, that induced me to hasten my journey to Venice. Sylvio was obliged to send a letter before me, in order to prepare the way for my sudden appearance, and to procure me a welcome reception. My father embraced me with ecstasy, and the feebleness of

his old age seemed to leave him. I played the part of a tender affectionate son, and endeavoured to render light the burdensome embraces of this disgusting grey-beard, by the thought of his fortune, and its accomplishing my plans already laid. But as soon as I saw that his palsied head would induce him tenaciously to attack my religious principles, which some of my papers (which his curiosity led him to open) had discovered to him, and that he wished to make me a fanatic, I began to perceive that even the little time he had to live, would be of too long continuance. He could be of no more service to me, and was a barrier in the way of my undertakings; why should I wear longer the mask, when I could expect no further profit by so doing? Better, I thought, that the old tree should make room for the young one, that it might gain more strength: and of this my father reaped the profit, for I suffered him not to struggle long with a painful death. In a sweet slumber I sent him to a better world, after having despatched Sylvio his bosom friend."

"Good God!" exclaimed the Prince: "How! Is it possible for a man to murder his father!"

"You should add *in cool blood*; this alone distinguishes me from all those who perhaps have committed such an act in the heat of passion. Indeed I could have spared him, had he not by his irresistible curiosity opened some of my papers, by which a part of my plans and manner of thinking might have been betrayed. He could have no confidence in my words, for he, with the help of Sylvio, usurped the authority of a father. He even began to command, to admonish, to threaten. Prince, I could not bear a superior, who began to interrupt my course! And had I not to fear that his complaints of me would lay me open to suspicion, and by that means injure my reputation, as many thought me a pattern of sanctity? The coward only trembles at obstacles which appear insurmountable.—I was wont to break through them."

The Count O—— in continuation.

Every nerve of my frame now shuddered from an over-powering complication of terror and grief. It was to

me, as if my soul, filled with detestation, laboured powerfully to destroy the limits of its habitation, in order to flee from this more than infernal malice-breathing outcast. My eyes were fixed in my head. Though deeply oppressed, my heart throbbed — my breast seemed to deny respiration, and a cold sweat spread all over me. The Armenian remained with steadfast looks, and seemed to view with a contemptuous smile our horror at his situation. No signs of repentance were discovered in his countenance, in which we might have hoped to trace the feelings of a man.

At length he proceeded in his narrative.

History of the Armenian resumed.

“ I continued but a few months at Venice, as a great many young patricians pressed around me, each of whom earnestly endeavoured to gain my friendship. My family and fortune gave me frequently a right of pre-eminence, which I made beneficial without appearing to assume more than was due to my situation. I discovered, with pleasure, that many had already conceived an unextinguishable hatred against the government, and which became more bitter whenever they endeavoured to suppress it, and therefore so much the more dangerous. All circumstances united for the accomplishment of my plan. Venice was to be overthrown by me, and upon its ruins was to be laid the foundation of my throne and government. To rise much higher would be no difficulty, could I but gain one step from my present situation. In this thought I was daily more and more strengthened. Each day convinced me, that in no place could my plan be so well executed as here, where I found all things prepared for my purpose. A great part of the nobility were dissatisfied with the tyranny of the government, most of the provinces sighed under the greatest oppression; the mob were like blades of corn, easily agitated and put into motion; nothing was wanted but to make use of all these favourable circumstances.

“ From what I had already heard and known of the government of Venice, I found it necessary to use the utmost precaution, and to proceed with the greatest care

in every thing that I was about to undertake. I observed these rules the more, as they had been already a kind of law within me ; they, therefore, gained me much attention and respect. I endeavoured by many means which I employed to discover, nay to extort, the sentiments of every one (which is very difficult here) without giving them the least hint concerning mine. But carefully as I thought I had concealed every thing from the eyes of the public, some, however, had looked further into my character than I supposed. In disguise, and wrapped up in deep contemplation, I walked upon the platform of Saint Mark. It had just begun to grow dark, when a party of bungling musicians came and surrounded me. I thought that this was nothing more than a common diversion ; but I had deceived myself. The kind of romance which they sung seemed to have some allegorical reference to myself. Little as this might be perceived by any other person, the meaning of it did not escape my observation. I was willing to consider it as accidental, when one of their company pressed close to me, and put a paper secretly into my hand, whilst the others began to sing : — ‘ Hide it,’ said he, ‘ cautiously, and take care that no one discovers it ; else thou wilt lie to-morrow stretched at length in thy grave.’

“ These words, which were sung by a woman disguised as a fairy, did not escape my attention ; and on account of the emphatical manner in which they were repeated, they made a deep impression on my mind. I put the paper into my pocket, and went immediately home. As quickly as possible I opened the letter, and read as follows : —

“ ‘ Friend or foe, it will entirely depend upon yourself, which of these names shall be applied to you by us for the future. For your own benefit we wish that it may be the former ; and now hear our request. We all are dissatisfied with the government, which hitherto has tyrannised over our country, cruelly oppressed its most noble subjects, and recompensed its most sincere friends with shameful ingratitude. Prerogatives, that in other countries are the right of every honourable patriot, which the enraptured poet makes

the object of his sublimest strains, and thus transmits them to posterity, of what benefit are they here? They only lead the victim to a disgraceful punishment. — Is not this calculated to banish from our country all greatness of mind, and to destroy every incentive to magnanimous actions? How often has the greatest general that drew his sword to revenge his country's wrongs fallen a victim to prejudice, whilst he was the friend of liberty! How often has the greatest statesman been sacrificed to the lowest intrigues and meanest jealousy! Our history is fraught with examples of this kind, every one of which will be an infamous stain upon our character, and must render us contemptible in the eyes of every stranger. — And shall we longer support this evil when it is in your power to relieve us? We delight in the idea of freedom, though the faintest shadow of it cannot be found among us! — Are not all our steps watched by numberless spies? Do not they catch at every syllable? And do we not often become a prey, even though we possess the greatest innocence, to the despotism of those abandoned creatures? — Does not the blood of our brethren and relations, which was spilt by that never-sated lust of murder, which they call state-prudence, cry aloud for revenge?

“ ‘ Ferdinando, from the noble race of Miscalini, need we tell you more? Does not your blood boil within you? Are not such insults to common sense sufficient to drive a man mad? — Can your country be indifferent to you? — And will not the blood of your relations move you? We dreamt of freedom — we awoke, and the picture which fancy had portrayed disappeared. Real liberty shall occupy its place, or an eternal sleep, at least, shall procure us an eternal dream; where the ideal picture, to which we sacrificed our freedom, shall perpetually stand before our eyes. There is a great party of us, linked by an indissoluble tie, and ready to meet death, or live like men; our numbers will increase, for our voices will rouse many from an apparent state of stupor, who will immediately see their error. Courage inspires us all — large sums of money are in our hands; — a prudent leader only is wanting.

“ ‘ Ferdinando, will you be that person? Your high

rank, together with your judgment, induce us to make this request. We are more acquainted with you than you perhaps imagine. A peculiar circumstance has given us the information — (only us alone). We well know the history of the various events, which by your management occurred to both the secretaries at —d—. It is as incomprehensible to us as your conduct, and on that account you are our man. We hope you will not hesitate to accept our invitation; for you are, perhaps, not so much a stranger here, as not to know that by our excellent government we can effectually employ the assassin's dagger. We could have made use of it, but we confide in you, of which this letter is a proof. If you accept of our offer, as we scarcely doubt that you will, then let your apartment be illuminated at midnight. Yet it is requisite that you should be alone. You shall then hear more from us. Till that time you will be closely observed. The business requires great foresight, and on that account, and with anxious hope, we name ourselves, merely,

“ ‘ Your
“ ‘ FRIENDS.’

“ Nothing could be more desirable to me than the receipt of such a letter. I must confess that it overcame me at first. However I had prepared every thing, being in expectation of such an offer; for I knew many of the nobility were dissatisfied. But that this invitation would be given me so soon, exceeded my expectation. The enthusiasm that was displayed in the letter, delighted me so much, that I read it several times over; for experience had long since taught me what to expect from men who were actuated by such motives. These only ought we to make use of, and they may be managed as we please. I could pretty nearly guess who the authors were, and with great impatience I waited for the appointed midnight hour.

“ It arrived. My sensations were directed to something solemn, and even the clocks seemed to sound differently from what they usually did. I thought it a kind of premonition of what might happen in future. Suddenly the door flew open, and a figure, very much disguised, stood before me. ‘Ferdinando Miscarini, are you resolved?’ said the stranger,

with a deep expression and seriousness of voice. 'I am!' I replied. 'Then follow me.' I was obliged to wrap myself up in black, and we went off. As soon as we came to the canal, we found a boat for us. He blind-folded me; and when he took the bandage from my eyes, I found myself in the hall, to which you both were once brought.*

"About twenty black masks rose from their seats, and bowed respectfully, whilst my companion brought me nearer to them, and addressed them in the following words: — 'He is resolved — he belongs to us.' 'You are then resolved to belong to us, in order to fulfil our demand?' said one of them who occupied the first place. 'I am.' 'And your resolution is not premature? Is it firm?' 'It is; for ever.' 'And you will not repent?' 'I am a man.' 'And if, by being linked with us, the most shameful, the most tormenting death should be your lot, and you could even by treachery revenge yourself, and procure riches and honours, what would you do?' 'Does there need such a question? Let them slowly boil me in hot oil, and even extract the marrow from my bones, and pierce me with red hot irons: I should be silent!' 'Then swear,' they all exclaimed at once.

"This I did with all the solemnity possible. Whilst kneeling, they all pointed their naked daggers towards my breast. They swore obedience to me in the like manner, because I earnestly desired it from them. They then snatched off their masks and exclaimed, 'Welcome, welcome, Ferdinando Miscalini; welcome the chief of our band.' 'And now,' said I, 'attend to this your sacred duty. Be careful in every word which you utter, and in every step you intend to take, to avoid every clandestine conversation. Moderate the just revenge which burns within their breast, till the period arrives which I shall fix upon; it may then burst forth like a rapid overwhelming torrent. — Will you do so?' 'We will.' 'I shall do all, even what your most sanguine expectations can suggest; but till then, I again repeat, patience and obedience!'

"I now diligently sought to gain the confidence of my fellow conspirators, or rather my subjects; and each day

* See vol. i. p. 14.

gave me new proofs how well I succeeded. One of my principal objects was, to extend as much as possible the order of ——. There was scarcely an employment or situation but what was filled by some of its members. The good fame of the order had already been of great advantage to many of my plans; and they rejoiced to find me a representative of it. They came in multitudes to be received by me, and thought it a mark of honour to wear its official symbols. The considerable fees of entrance which were paid by the wealthy, and the extraordinary contributions which the members gave, united with my large income, not only enabled me to live in the greatest splendour, in order to obtain my views and to purchase the assistance of poor people, whom I wanted very much; but I even saved considerable sums. I do not choose to say any thing to you of the meetings of the order, for it does not belong to this place. They were repeated weekly, and I never failed to encourage the conspirators to persevere in the exalted ideas they had already formed. You will also imagine, that I accounted for the expenditure of the money, which I obtained in the order, as contributing to the honour of the society, although I spent it merely to gratify my own desires, and to further the designs of the principal conspirators.

“It was one of our most rigorous laws, that every thing was to be discovered to the chief of the order, to prevent surprise or misfortunes. This circumstance I turned to very great advantage. Treaties, and all secrets which had the least connection with me, or with the order, I cautiously applied to assist our designs. No oath of secrecy was so great and solemn, but it would have been broken for that purpose; no person was spared; any one was despatched immediately, when the order had reason to be suspicious of his integrity. And there was not one among the whole society, who would not with pleasure have stabbed that man to the heart, whose death-warrant I had signed in the name of the order.”

“This astonishes me exceedingly,” observed the Prince, “surely the order must have greatly suffered by it, if they encouraged their members so often to commit murders?”

“ The riddle, Prince, is so easily explained, that I wonder you can require this now from me. How many have been assassinated by monks without their influence and authority being diminished by it? And how was this accomplished? They made it a cause of religion, and I made ours the cause of the order and zeal for the benefit of the community. Can you not readily conceive, that he whom I commanded to be murdered, I carefully represented to the assassin as a villain who did not deserve mercy, or we should willingly have granted it? I always employed people for that purpose, upon whose secrecy I could depend. Under such circumstances, an inviolable secrecy was preserved, the pious members of the order knew not a syllable of it, and the numbers increased daily.”

“ But did not such a society awaken the suspicion of the state?”

“ In that respect, the order was advantageously circumstanced. I took care that no proceeding was made known, from which a bad opinion of it could have been fairly inferred. The many benefits which the order conferred upon the poor, and which were bestowed sometimes for appearance sake, at others for the promotion of my plans, could not be hurtful to the state. On the contrary, we gained acquisitions from that side; many members came over to us who had the highest offices in the state, and who were spoken of as moralists.”

“ But amongst so great a multitude of members, might there not have been some who had considered it more deeply, and discovered that the order was a mere mask for concealing dangerous designs? Must not such a thought occur to those who executed these wicked deeds?”

“ Would not you place confidence in the man who was able to form such effectual plans, and pledged himself for their execution? — Would you not think that he must be wise and discreet? Every man of consequence had his spies about him, for we contrived that even his footmen should be our tools. By such means I was acquainted with all their actions and movements; and as soon as they seemed unfavourable to me, one hint was sufficient to have

the victim of my suspicions sent to the grave. I confess, that my once retentive memory cannot now state the number who experienced that fate. If the informations of common spies were insufficient, it was not difficult for one of us to introduce himself as a friend, and thus discover his most secret thoughts ; and if this scheme was frustrated, then I had recourse to the power of the state inquisition, and by that means had him condemned at all events. I sought, besides, to increase the dissatisfaction to the government which the conspirators had already excited, by every method which offered itself to me, and even considerably to inflame their own secret hatred against them. Nay, I knew how to corrupt the minds of those with revolutionary principles, who had not been of that opinion. This was very easy to do, without their being able to discover my views.

“ The jealousy of the state, which has often deprived the most noble family of an excellent member made its sacrifice, was always detested by the relations of the deceased ; but all were too much accustomed to regard that blood-thirsty hyena, the inquisition, as a necessary evil, or rather they were prevented by terror, from publicly expressing their detestation for such an iniquitous tribunal. Thus the evil was reconciled, and their only consolation was, that others had suffered the same fate, and if they canonised the victim, it was considered as an honourable mark of respect to his ashes, and reckoned a sufficient recompence for their infamous cruelty.* All these wounds I sought to irritate, or to make fresh ones, and I could see with the greatest certainty, the good effect of it, as nobody would bear without discontent unmerited affliction. Does not (thought I) even the most insignificant insect stretch forth its jaws to bite him who endeavours to crush it ? Thus all feeling will not be entirely extinguished, and of course many will think of revenge.

“ It was mine, as well as my associates’ most serious occupation to procure sacrifices to this state jealousy, and

* See an interesting publication on that subject in “ Maier’s Description of Venice,” 4 vols. Second edition. Leipsic, 1795.

we naturally selected those whom we in the least suspected. We employed false witnesses, treasonable letters were produced, and sometimes nothing more was wanting to ensure the suspicious person a tomb in the canal Orsono. I could relate to you many histories, to show how we proceeded, but I think them rather too trifling to detain you by such relations. How often did even the most wretched spy succeed in sacrificing an innocent man, merely to obtain the appointed reward ! In all [these affairs, I was the sole director of the whole, and left the execution of it to those subordinate to me. By that means I had the consolation to see in every department conspirators at the head, who had all possible influence in forwarding our grand aim. How easy is it to irritate a despicable state like that of Venice, to the commission of the most horrid murders !

“ Every undertaking was successful, and the number of conspirators increased every week. Their desire of revenge was already risen to so high a pitch, that I alone, and that by the most serious admonitions, could prevent the storm from bursting. I told them, that it was not yet the proper time for our purpose ; and did all in my power to persuade them to wait with patience for a short interval, when we should be sure of the most signal success. My arguments, my courage, my resolution and actions, soon acquired me, even among the most savage, such unlimited influence, that they gave up themselves blindly and with great alacrity to my direction, and without enquiring into many things which appeared paradoxical to them.

“ Prince, you seem not surprised that a party of conspirators gave themselves up entirely to my plans, promised to adhere to me by an oath (which in their eyes you will say is not looked upon as any thing), and kept it punctually. Do you not ask how it was possible for me to acquire such a great ascendancy ? You must have forgotten yourself, when you, a great moralist, a pious, virtuous, and highly esteemed person, who are known to be possessed of so much human knowledge, would have obeyed any suggestions, let the execution of them have been ever so

capricious or wicked.* The putting the mob in motion was left to me, as without their aid the whole fabric must have been demolished. Many of the statesmen among the conspirators, as I have observed, had high employments, and I myself was soon elevated to a similar situation. We did every thing in our power to make the poor people think their burdens insupportable. Even if this end were not answered, it produced still another advantage, as they confined to us all the places of dignity, and confirmed our appointments; for you cannot yet have forgotten, that this is the case with all those whom the people hate the most, because the state has the least to fear from them. We became more and more powerful, and I did not suffer the original scheme to be at all violated, but studied how to increase our influence. The oppressions of the state we contrived should rapidly increase, as the breaking out of the conspiracy approached. We began to oppose the common attachment to idleness; we declared that begging should be prohibited, and by that means the mob kept to industry and labour; moreover we determined to abolish the frequent festivals and other diversions.

“ The few statesmen who did not belong to the conspiracy, were easily overcome, or deceived by the appearance of this innovation; and if none of them would suit, there was another method of obtaining our aim, which never failed, namely, restoring to the mob their pleasures and their feasts, by our authority. The advantage we were to derive from that is very obvious; for the mob, who think the government good and perfect only when it sanctions their favourite inclinations, must of course be the more enraged, when they find themselves so suddenly deprived of their pleasures, and no beam of hope left that they shall ever return. We then began to show ourselves from a distance as their saviours, and we could expect them with certainty

* The Prince had never the intention to give him any answer to such questions. His countenance showed distinctly how much he suffered, how much the burden of his crimes oppressed him, and that he now saw clearly the consequences of his guilt, which he heard from the mouth of a seducer. My compassion towards the Prince, which continually agitated my inmost frame, could only be diverted by the strongest detestation for the Armenian, whose face seemed to glow with pleasure at the thought of having seduced an honest man.

to join us in large parties. All these things were prepared, and the proclamation was merely delayed, because I thought it as yet not proper. I could see plainly, that the conspiracy, though it should break out in its most horrid form, would not satisfy my views, which were extended to the throne of government. I feared internal divisions; or that they would not like a sovereign at the head of a republic, the principle of which they had long before imbibed.

“ To behold myself as a kind of Doge, which dignity I could have acquired without great difficulty, seemed rather too mean for me, who had ventured so much. I justly conceived, that every one of the noble conspirators would have contended with me for equal rights, although till that period they strictly obeyed my commands. I at least had reason to expect this from their interest and vanity, as soon as they saw that their purpose was accomplished, and that I was of no more use to them. The power of a foreign court only could support me, which I hoped, from a variety of circumstances, easily to obtain; yet there were some difficulties in my way; for my personal appearance at different places would have been of the greatest assistance in my designs, but it was necessary for me to continue at Venice. I had many concerns of my own which I could not trust to another; and besides, I was at the same time Inquisitor of the State.

“ Before I had resolved how to proceed, I received a letter which at once removed all embarrassment. It was from Charles. I commanded him to stay at —d—, and to give me an account of all circumstances which took place there. Till now I had heard nothing of him; I began, therefore, to consider him as lost, when I received a letter in hieroglyphics to the following purport: * —

“ ‘ —d— the 15th—, 17—.

“ ‘ As I dare say you are surprised at having heard nothing from me for so long a time, I must tell you the reason. Trifling affairs I thought not worth while to

* This letter I found among the papers of the Armenian. All his writings were in my possession.—COUNT O—.

communicate to you, and business of importance I did not think proper to trust to the post. I know, that at Venice they have eyes like Argus, and an hieroglyphical letter might excite suspicion. On the supposition that you would be angry with me for not using other means to give you information, I entreat you to read this letter, and your anger I hope will soon change into joy and satisfaction; for myself, I am so proud of what I have done, that I look forward with confidence for your commendation. That it might in some great measure be obtained, I thought proper not to acquaint you earlier with my undertakings, till I could be perfectly sure of their entire success, and on that account you will excuse my delay.

“ ‘ Now to the business. I informed you in my last letter, that both the private ministers L—— and D—— had been despatched in their prison. Rejoice with me, that this is false. These warm friends have been preserved, though their death was asserted so confidently that I myself was deceived. At that time, one did not know how to proceed, nor whom to believe. Only a very few, who had been in the confidence, and always about — d —, could know the proceedings with certainty, and on that account I do not wonder that my endeavours to obtain some news from my associates were fruitless. The Count P—— is now arrived. You are a great favourite of his: and if you were not the man, I should wonder; for he speaks of you with enthusiasm, and this is not his common method. You have studied his weak side so accurately, that he is involved in perpetual conjectures. He believes that you have the power of working miracles; and I cannot at all comprehend this peculiar phenomenon, which is such a direct contrast with his usual mode of thinking. The greatest physiologists could not learn very much of us; for were they to examine us closely, they perhaps might entirely lose themselves in the labyrinth of hypothesis. I became acquainted with this Count P—— in one of our lodges. As my character at present is in high estimation, I easily obtained admittance into his private societies, and I soon succeeded in ingratiating myself into his favour, when he heard that I knew you personally.

“ ‘ I learned from him, that both the secretaries L—— and D—— were still alive, but in close prison ; and as they would not confess any thing, in spite of all the rigorous means which had been employed, the ——d—— had not yet passed his sentence upon them. Before I had heard the truth of their fate, I formed the resolution to save these persons at all hazards, and in that I have succeeded so excellently that you will exult in your worthy scholar. My first business was to prepare for the gaoler a dose which sent him to his long home. By means of the count P—— I procured another person in his place, who was one of my associates, and a cunning fellow. By his means, all the locks, bolts, &c. were so prepared, that they could be opened with little trouble, and your newly invented aqua fortis I used in this instance with incredible effect. A dark night was chosen for the purpose of setting both at liberty. In order to prevent their searching after them, and to exalt your power in the eyes of count P——, I threw into the prison the following note :—

“ ‘ You have experienced my power, and yet you dared to confine my favourites in dismal prisons. Could you suppose that it would be impossible for me to break open locks and bolts ? Do not enquire further after them, else shall my powerful arm execute the punishment which compassion and weakness still withhold.

*“ ‘ BARON VATIFIELLO.’**

“ ‘ The effect which this produced was so great, that it was prohibited on pain of the most severe punishment to speak a word of these circumstances, particularly as they found the gaoler shot, which business I contrived, but in such a manner, that it appeared as though he had committed this action himself. I pitied the poor fellow, for I could have made further use of him ; but, I feared that he might not be cautious enough ; and besides that, I had promised him a recompense, which I could never bestow. Besides, it was calculated to produce a deep impression, as it appeared that this man had killed himself through mistake.

* The reader will recollect that the Armenian was known in ——d—— under this name.

The most certain way is always to be preferred ; you have frequently told me so yourself ; and if I had considered this sooner, I should not have made such an ample excuse, thereby exhibiting a kind of weakness, as if I ought to hesitate before I sacrificed a man for either your interest or my own. I am heartily ashamed of that, and now give you the greatest assurance of improvement, that I may obtain your pardon.

“ ‘ As soon as I had my prisoners in safety, they fell before me upon their knees ; for till then, it seemed to me as if veneration and terror had confined their tongues. They thought me an ambassador from you, and I suffered them to continue in that opinion. They then confessed to me that they had confidently reckoned upon your delivering them. These men are entirely at your service, for they have promised me to perform any thing that you command them to do. One I have sent to —, and the other to —, after having given them instructions. I hope this will be agreeable to you ; and so much the more as D—— sent me a letter to-day, a copy of which I will communicate to you. That count P—— is the favourite of ——d—— I have already told you. I only add, that he has made himself so necessary to him, that nothing can be undertaken without him.

“ ‘ CHARLES.

“ ‘ P. S. — I have just received a letter from L——, saying that he already begins to act a great character at —. All goes on agreeably to our wishes, and as soon as I hear any thing of consequence from him, I will communicate it to you. I believe he may do you many great services there. The bearer of this you may entirely confide in.

“ *Copy of the enclosed Letter.*

“ ‘ The President —— to Charles ——

“ ‘ —— the 17th —.

“ ‘ My joy and haste oblige me to tell you that in a few words with which I could fill many sheets. But with

what shall I begin first? I find that this task is more difficult than I imagined. I have been wonderfully successful in all my undertakings. By your management I am at present so disguised, that my fear of being discovered is now converted into boldness, and nobody has any idea who I am — I think that this may principally be attributed to the baron Vatifello. If this immortal being would once vouchsafe to make me so happy as to employ me as an instrument in his wonderful deeds! Yet I perhaps wish too much. You know I have assumed the name of —, and am already risen to the rank of president. The — has given me his favour in the highest degree. I should be vain enough to imagine, that this, or at least a part of it, might be ascribed to my personal abilities, were it not, that when I seriously consider, I think that I must attribute all to the baron and the Order of —, into which your goodness has introduced me as a member. Before I conclude, I must give you a proof how well I am beloved by —. His nephew will soon be at Venice, and will stay there for some time incog.: this he has told me in confidence. You will perhaps say in reply, that this is not of sufficient consequence to cause much exultation; but I would observe, that it may become so, for — keeps it as a secret from *every other person* without exception, and without pretending to have any other intentions than those which are laudable. I made myself dear to the sovereign by degrees, and have been obliged to write in his name several letters to the young prince. I must expedite the bearer of this, who goes on business for my master; and without making his appearance, he will send this letter to you by a third person. I hope I shall soon be able to write you more fully. I conclude with thanks for your kindness: I do this in few words, because my heart is not able by any language to express its gratitude. You may rely upon my fulfilling all your commands in the most punctual manner. I look with anxiety for your satisfaction, which will increase my happiness in the highest degree. In the mean time I remain your

“ ‘DEBTOR.’

“ ‘ P. S. — I was obliged to open this letter again. It was forgotten by an unpardonable negligence of the messenger, who had for a long time carried it about in his port-manteau. When I was informed of this, I could account for your long and till then inexplicable silence. At this time I have ready a parcel of letters for you, which will inform you what this letter can but tell you in a small degree. All is going on according to your own wishes. As soon as you inform me where I may send the parcel of letters to, you shall receive them without delay. The sincerity which you will find in them, must convince you how much I am disposed towards him to whom I owe every thing. The prince of —— has been some time at Venice : this information may be of the greatest consequence. All is tolerably quiet here, because the —— has been very much attacked by his usual disorder.’

“ The account that you, Prince, were here, as well as the rest of the information, gave me great pleasure, for nothing ever occurred but what I overcame without any difficulty. You were from that moment the principal object of my attention ; and that I should make you subservient to my purpose, I deemed certain, before I could possibly know your character. The idea may seem absurd, but I could not bring myself to think otherwise. My conjecture became so much the more strengthened, when I beheld you, and observed in your countenance a pleasing melancholy, which promised me the best effect, although your other qualities seemed in some measure to be in opposition to your appearance. To make you entirely dependent upon me, was my first resolution, being the groundwork of my plan. I was desirous that they should choose you king of —— . This seemed to me certain, because I learned, during my stay in —— , that there were many dissatisfied and rebellious persons in the nation, anxious to obtain a regent from the house of —— , who would restore them all their ancient privileges.

“ Prince, I feel how difficult it is to make a plan of mine appear to another person clear and intelligible ; let it suffice that I executed them with effect, and triumphed over seeming impossibilities. The success of all my schemes, till the

period when they arrested me, and when I, as the master spring, was made inactive, vouch for the truth of my assertions.* Now, Prince, recollect the period when I made myself first known to you, from which time I intend to trace your history minutely.† It was upon the terrace of Saint Mark where I followed you in the mask of an Armenian, and announced to you the death of one of your relations. I believed it to be the best method to act mysteriously; justly conceiving, that under such circumstances you would retain a greater veneration for me, and be very desirous to procure a more intimate acquaintance with me."

"In this," replied the Prince with sorrow, "you did but too well succeed, for I had scarcely any desire but that of speaking to you. How could it be otherwise, since your account agreed so perfectly with the truth! That you knew my real name, I now no longer wonder: but that you could announce the death of the hereditary prince, and the hour in which he expired, is still an enigma to me; at least I wish to have it unravelled, that I may no longer judge erroneously."

"I have already told you," said the Armenian, "that D—— was then in —— under the name of ——, president, and was in complete possession of the favour of the ——. This person was a willing tool in my hands. I sent him some poison, which he was to put in the drink of the hereditary prince; and I was so well acquainted with its slow effect, that I could calculate the hour of his death very minutely. Finding that you lived very retiredly, it was necessary for me (in order to afford my spies an easy access to you) to involve you in the intoxicating pleasures of dissipation; for every thing that tended to promote serious consideration was disadvantageous to me: with this view I discovered your rank, and the natural consequence was, that the ambassadors of the senate received you with all possible respect: you found that it was agreeable to what I had previously informed you. This was done to give you a fresh

* I omit what he has related here. The reader knows it already, from the intercepted hieroglyphical letters by lord Seymour. The Armenian did not then know that their contents were already made public.

† I must beg of the reader to recollect all that happened to the Prince, as related in the foregoing volume.

proof how materially I was acquainted with all that concerned you, and to prevent any embarrassment in the assembly to which they conducted you, I was present as a nobleman, and observed with pleasure how deep the impression which I had made was engraven upon your mind. To surprise you with something wonderful, and to strengthen the idea that I every where followed you invisibly, I went the next evening (for the purpose of observing you) to the terrace of Saint Mark in an unknown mask. I was not long there when you appeared with Count O——, and were compelled by a shower of rain to enter a coffee-house.

“The circumstance which happened there you cannot forget.* It made part of the plan I was pursuing. The hall into which you were brought by my command, was the rendezvous of the conspirators; and the beheading of the Venetian, who belonged to our party, was merely a piece of deception with a large puppet, by which means I recommended to you caution during your continuance at Venice. Knowing as you do, that what I have explained actually happened, it will not appear singular to you, that I delivered your watch (as a sign that you might perhaps not come home so soon as usual) to one of your attendants. I took it from your pocket in the tumult.”†

“And what was your intention by that? Perhaps nothing more than to raise yourself in my estimation.”

“Partly so; for by that I prevented their enquiring after you, and it convinced them that you were not, as some had supposed, in the hands of the state inquisition, the discovery of which might have had bad consequences. I knew perfectly well that you were not very desirous to remain longer at Venice, in spite of what had happened to you; and on that account I contrived with the president —— that you should receive a letter, in which your court suggested that they would be well pleased with your continuing at Venice. Hence it was that you were enabled, by large remittances, to make that splendid figure in the circles of gaiety which your situation required; and without this I was confident you would not have continued so long there. It was pur-

* See vol. i. p. 13.

† See vol. i. p. 15.

suant to my commands that the physician proposed a journey of pleasure upon the Brenta, after you were recovered from a fever; and all that happened to you there was previously ordered by me, and was executed by a cunning fellow whom you suspected to be a Sicilian. He has given you an exact explanation of most parts; and I will only inform you of that in which he dealt falsely with you, according to the character he was obliged to display. The scene which took place with the children *, I designed should not only please your fancy, but elevate your ideas beyond the sphere to which they were at that moment confined."

"Then I was not mistaken when I thought the Sicilian was concerned with you?"

"Certainly not. I now reflected what other means I should use to accomplish my plans; and wisely considered, that the sooner I began the better. In what manner the first appearance of the ghost was contrived you know already; and it could not have been difficult for you to have discovered it yourself, because I meant it merely as an introduction; and, for that purpose, I chose the Sicilian to act the part, who, without doing me any mischief, could easily come forward as a deceiver, and whom I designed to assist me in the subsequent performances."

"And you would have obtained your object if the Sicilian had not related so much to me, which inevitably weakened the impression, if it did not extinguish it entirely."

"I know it, and he has suffered very severely for it. On that account many schemes to support my plan became requisite, which would not have been necessary if a mistrust had not been excited against me."

"But the second apparition you have not yet explained to us."

"It was a very cunning person whom I had instructed in the business, and who had shrouded himself, in case of violence, with a strong suit of armour. As I had your snuff-box many times in my hands, I examined the portrait upon it very minutely, and knew that it was a copy of your deceased friend: thus I was able to give the ghost a strong

* See vol. i. p. 17.

likeness, by means of a wax mask which I had manufactured myself. The other circumstances were trifles ; as, by the smoke of olive wood and spirits of wine, I prevented your making any exact observations."

" But where did this man enter so suddenly ? "

" Do you not remember that a cloud of smoke filled the whole apartment ? It came from an opening in the boards ; and these means were employed to obscure the figure as it ascended through the trap-door, which closed itself by a spring."

" And the appearance of the constables ? "

" Was contrived by me, that you might not suspect that I was concerned with the Sicilian."

" The ball rolled slowly upon the altar, how was that ? "

" I had loaded the pistols with powder only, and the Sicilian himself rolled the ball upon the altar."

" Oh God ! " exclaimed the Prince, and tears stood in his eyes, " was I then so near discovering the trick, and yet " —

" You ought to admire me so much the more," said the Armenian, bursting out into a violent fit of laughter. " Is it not true, Prince, my invention rises far above my conception ? It must be done by art, if you mean to catch a person after he has perceived the net." *

" You ordered the Sicilian to be apprehended. Did you not intend by that to let us have a conversation with him, that it might give us the key to his juggling tricks ? "

" Undoubtedly : for as he explained to you the appearances falsely (which lie you might have discovered by a little attention), I thought those which I had to produce myself would be represented to you so much the more plausibly as wonders."

" And that was the very point in which you entirely missed your aim," said the Prince, " that was exactly the method to open my eyes."

" But for how long ? — Yes, Prince, I confess, that I

* The remainder which the Armenian explained of that apparition, was nothing more than what the reader already knows from the Prince's conjectures ; and the more this was unravelled, the more his sorrow increased, so that we scarcely were able to comfort him. — NOTE OF COUNT O——.

did not expect that of you. It was something uncommon, and I was not sufficiently acquainted with you to be aware of this. Besides, the Sicilian went further than my orders extended."

"I perceive that. And is it true, then, that the whole story concerning Lorenzo del M— was invention." *

"Nothing else, I can assure you."

"It was of no great use to you, for the Sicilian gave a feeble account of the story of the ring†; there the wretched deceiver was too much unmasked."

"And yet this was exactly agreeable to my plan."

"How?"

"I have told you before, that I did not know you well enough; and I believed, that if a deceiver of such a kind, who was in connection with a murderer, impeached the character which I had played—if such an one I say, should give evidence against me, it must make a stronger impression upon you, as by every inducement he had a tie to the contrary."

"But what could you imagine would follow the letting us know, that he made his escape? as by that our suspicion must have been augmented."

"That indeed happened without my knowledge. I was under the necessity of being absent for several days: they did not find out his escape in time, otherwise you would never have heard of it."

"What view had you in causing the second apparition to say that I should experience it at Rome, and that I ought to look to myself?"

"This was nothing more than an allusion to your future conversion to the Roman Catholic Church, and to try whether you would by such means be persuaded to take a journey to Rome. If I had perceived that you were inclined to go there, I should have employed other means in order to dissuade you from it. From that also I could conclude, that you thought the second appearance of the ghost to be no deception, and this was a sufficient inducement for me to proceed in my operations. I soon discovered you to be a sceptic; on that account, I was obliged to use

* See vol. i. p. 39.

† See vol. i. p. 47.

other means by which I might obtain my aim; and although this could not be done suddenly, I thought it would be effected with certainty. Through the contrivance of a certain priest, your servant was drawn into my net, and I commanded that he should even be surprised and taken up."

"And this also happened through you? Oh God!—And what views had you in doing that?"

"Many: but those which concerned you were not answered—(only in a subsequent period he became useful to me; but till I describe that time, I will delay mentioning him)—I succeeded by his loss in bringing one of my most skilful creatures into your service,—the cunning Biondello. All that they told you of him, when you engaged him, was done merely to induce you to take him without hesitation. That it was easy to obtain your favour, the consequences of this event have shown. As they had told you so many fine stories of his disinterested character and fidelity, and that by the multitude of his associates (whom he could make use of every moment), he must become very necessary for you, it was not to be wondered at that you made unconditional use of him, and placed in him the greatest confidence. From him I became acquainted with every little project of yours, and when you thought I had no concern in your undertakings, they were solely under my direction.

"Without even my expecting it, there arose another advantage, when you conceived the idea of explaining in a natural manner that which you believed at first to be a wonder, namely, the idea that the whole system of religion, which you had imbibed in your infancy, might be founded on erroneous principles. I heard with great pleasure from Biondello, that you already began to doubt its purity, which seemed to you till then too holy to admit of an attack. Whatever Biondello said against the proposition, I could so clearly see the beneficial consequences which would arise from it, that I employed every method to detach you from your religion, and, if possible, to make it detestable to you, and to convert you into a free-thinker. It was then that I hoped to find you a perfect victim to my authority. It

was by my contrivance that your imaginary friends put into your hands all those books which seconded my intention, and that you were afterwards introduced into the Bucentauro. And to prevent your again enjoying that tranquillity of mind which was so much distinguished in you, and which upon reflection might have returned, they sought in every possible manner to lead you into dissipation. They solicited your friendship, they seduced you, led you into the most agreeable companies, and endeavoured by every method to make your new manners of life as agreeable to you as possible.

“Do not think, Prince, that this was merely accident, although it might appear so to you. So humiliated as you now are, it can have no other than good consequences upon your Christian heart, particularly if you exercise this beloved virtue. On that account I once more remind you, that, notwithstanding your superior qualities, of which you boasted so highly, you would not have become the idol of every society you went into, if it had not been partly because you were a prince (a title which hides what would much disfigure others), and principally because I designed it to be so. Know, prince, for the many pleasant hours which you have passed in this manner, you still owe me your thanks.

“I now endeavoured to get rid of you, Count O——. It was effected by a letter to one of my brethren at the court of your sovereign; and your presence there, you know yourself, became so necessary, that you dared not stay longer here, though you were very much inclined to it.”

“But I am surprised,” replied I, “that you did not take a shorter step: you might have assassinated me by one of your banditti.”

“Do not think so highly of yourself, my dear Count! —You were too despicable for me to have you murdered; and besides, it might have become too evident to the Prince, and perhaps (for what will not such trifles sometimes produce?) might have caused him to alter his opinions.”

“If I was so despicable to you, whence was it that you feared my presence?”

“ I feared your presence ! We often avoid a little stone that lies in our road, or rather, we push it away with the foot, to walk more commodiously, not because we fear to break our neck or leg by its being in the way. The hindrances which you could throw in my way, in respect to the Prince, were so trifling, so— But why do I defend myself ? The wise man very often suffers himself to be stung by a fly, when he has it in his power to chase it away. Yet I must be a little gallant to you, and for that reason I willingly will confess to you, that in comparison with the other cavaliers of the Prince’s household, I had more to fear from you than those buzzing insects of the day. You see, Count, that I speak plainly to you.

“ Now I will return to you, my most gracious exalted master ! Till this period you had not made an appearance, which would in the end cause your circumstances to be embarrassed, and for which I wished so heartily. I saw beforehand, that this could happen in no other manner than by introducing you to a person with whom you would be obliged to draw a parallel, and by that means aid the accomplishment of my wishes. No one was better calculated for that purpose than the Prince of —d—, and I could easily induce him to come hither by the assistance of the Order— and the Count P—, who was much esteemed at that court. That his presence had the desired effect upon your conduct, you know without having it again repeated. That you should soon fall into the hands of usurers, was natural ; but anxious to prevent this taking place immediately, I contrived to throw a stranger in your way, and so make you dependent upon him. This was (till then unknown to you) the Marquis Civitella.”

How !” exclaimed the Prince, “ did I not save him from the hands of the banditti ? and”—

“ It was done by my express orders, Prince,” interrupted the Armenian hastily. “ Recollect the evening when you were carried home from the Bucentauro in a chair. Biondello had purposely fixed upon that which he knew would soon break ; and he conducted you wrong, in order to guide you unperceived to the spot where Civitella and his banditti waited for you. As soon as they heard your arrival,

they began to make a noise, and I knew that you would be led to the spot by your courage, and assist the person attacked. As soon as this happened, the banditti fled, for they were employed by us for that purpose, and you imagined you had rescued the Marquis."

"But his wounds," said the Prince, "were visible, and I myself was covered with blood."

"He had no wounds at all. At the dawn of morning, when the lamps were nearly extinguished, and in such a situation, it was very easy for him to deceive you by sprinkling blood upon your clothes. Consider also, that it was Biondello himself who, for appearance sake, dressed his wounds. Nobody from you even came to examine him."

"But why did you use such means to introduce to me the Marquis, as it would in any other manner have succeeded equally as well?"

"Because I wished to have him closely connected with you, which could not otherwise be done so well; for amongst the many with whom you were surrounded, you paid little attention to individuals; and besides, it would have displeased you if he had offered to lend you such large sums of money, had you not supposed that it was gratitude which induced him to do it. You were not aware, that your own egotism attached you to the Marquis, and he, on that account, conducted you every where, and by his extraordinary finesse persuaded you to many things which were agreeable to my intentions, and to the character which he was engaged to play. Biondello was no less expert at his employment; and he chose his apartment near the side of your sleeping-room. Now, therefore, consider whether it was wonderful that the least movement which you made was communicated to me, as you were always surrounded by two of my tools, in whom you placed an unlimited confidence. The other spies, who still served me, and who were found in every society in which you entered, I will not mention. I only remind you of these circumstances, that you may not be surprised when you find that the line of conduct which you thought an act of your own, was directed solely by my will.

“What I had foreseen and expected now happened. You were entirely without money. Your letters of credit were kept back by my contrivance; and, to make your embarrassment still more pressing, I contrived that you should borrow of an usurer. The whirlpools of dissipation and show, which the stay of the Prince ——d——, had caused, had already so engulfed you, that you could not be sufficiently master of your vanity to renounce it, otherwise than by leaving the place, which you knew would be suspicious. This however was necessary, if you would escape the abyss which was yawning to receive you, and which was enlarged to an alarming extent. You were unaccustomed to such a prospect. Fearing that all my former labours should prove fruitless, I was obliged to devise a scheme which would not only induce you to continue here, and gratify you in the mean time in the most agreeable manner, but which I could also employ in the execution of my plans.

“To answer this purpose, nothing appeared to me so proper as love; and this so much the more, because I knew perfectly well that this passion had never been roused within you, and must naturally burst forth the stronger. That I might proceed in the safest way, and not present to you many ladies without effect, I was disposed previously to try your taste. From several of the finest originals I had accurate copies taken, and commissioned a painter of Florence to offer them to you for sale. You know how soon you decided for the Madonna, and it was on that account unnecessary to make further trials with the other pieces. As I was confirmed by innumerable instances in the opinion, that fancy works the more powerfully if the object is taken from it, wherewith it was occupied, I contrived it so that you should not be able to buy the picture; for the painter knew beforehand, that it must not be left with you for the highest price, because it was already my own property; and, in order to destroy your hopes of obtaining it, it was told you, that a purchaser had already been found for it. The copy had so powerfully wrought upon your mind, that we naturally expected that you would be much impressed by the original, if we could exhibit her to you with

a proper combination of circumstances which really happened afterwards."

How!" exclaimed the Prince, "was this also your contrivance? — That love, which nothing else" —

"Do not put yourself out of temper, all shall be immediately explained to you. — Do you not remember that Civitella guided all your steps, and made you enter the church, where you found your beloved goddess, who already waited with impatience your arrival? Was any thing more wanting than to leave to her the part she was instructed to play, after you were already so much occupied with her picture? And to be certain that she had made the wished impression upon you, Civitella was obliged, in the concert he gave to you, to introduce the handsome lady who sung, conceiving that a melodious air sung by an enchanting voice, makes a sudden and sometimes deep impression. You were the only one in the company, who remained immovable and regardless. This gave us a sufficient ground to presume, that the impression you received, had not yet been effaced. In order, therefore, to make it deeper and more permanent, Biondello was to give you only a distant hint that she might be found again, and on that account you did not see her on the wished Sunday evening in church. Civitella at that period led you to the gaming-table, to plunge you still deeper in debt; and it must be ascribed to some other cause than your absence of mind, that you lost such large sums.

"This was the time to prejudice you against your court. D—— was long before convinced of your bad conduct, by several accounts which the President —— gave of you; it therefore only remained to inspire you with hatred against the court. The first attempt at this was by Biondello, who told you, that they employed spies to watch you. Your bad conscience (let me for once use this expression) suggested immediately that this could come from no other place than from —— . There was nothing more wanting than to confirm this proposed opinion within you, and Biondello (if it were possible) gained by that means upon your confidence. He was also instructed in giving you a hint, to whom you might attribute it, if the letters

should not arrive, which really happened, because I intercepted the correspondence."

"On that account," replied the Prince, "I advised Biondello not to imprison those negotiators. Oh! I now perceive more and more clearly, how shamefully I was deceived by those to whom I gave my confidence, which I had withdrawn from my truly worthy friends!"

"I determined to give you back your Greek Lady, fearful that the letter, which I had prepared for you by the President —— of your court, might attack you too severely, and then you would have a consolation left; and partly that you should not form a determination to leave Venice. What I suspected happened. As a fortunate lover, and under the idea of obtaining from your sister the accustomed supplies, you answered in an angry style, and the true enmity was vented; especially as you received a fresh letter, in which they laid much guilt to your charge, of which you were totally ignorant at that time."

"And how was it possible that the —— could believe such things of me?"

"That was managed by the President, who, in hopes of becoming a great man through me, adopted, out of gratitude, every method to fulfil my wishes. And this was very easy for him to do. I took care of the letters which he obtained; and those which I contrived to get signed by your bosom friend baron F—— (as they would believe him, he always taking your part with great warmth) produced the greatest effect."

"O God!" exclaimed the Prince, "had I but then only defended myself in a letter!"

"And you believe, then, that a letter written in such a style as that was, would have been sent away from hence? Before I had perused all your letters no one could be sent away, and those that arrived I always saw, previous to their being delivered to you. In every case I could without difficulty forge one, as I knew so well how to imitate all hand-writings, and you were always deceived; and if you sent one of your people as messenger with a letter, there were many means to shorten his journey. Your sister had by an accident learnt from —— all that was written to

him, and I laboured to make you also quarrel with her, which happened of itself to my great satisfaction. Now you had no affectionate tie that could bind you to your relations, and your situation was precisely what I wished it. In order to drive your despair to the highest pitch, and then to show myself as your saviour, I was obliged to deprive you of all that which you could now rely upon, your beloved lady and the Marquis.

“That you might have a high idea of me, and to prepare for what would follow, I contrived that apparition. The facility with which you then ascribed it to natural circumstances, made me with reason conclude how necessary it was that the impression of the following must become so much the stronger in proportion as you sought to enfeeble it by an explanation of the former. I should myself think it almost superfluous to explain to you the apparition, did I not expect to have the pleasure of witnessing and enjoying your mortification, that you could not once comprehend it, although blest with such deep discernment, or see through the simplicity of such an experiment.

“Listen then attentively. Biondello, so heartily beloved by you, to whom all your former friends gave way, performed this. That you might not suspect him, and to gain time for the preparations, he pretended to be indisposed. The book which they placed in your hands, kept you, according to my expectation, longer awake than was customary, so that you should not think what appeared was the effect of a dream. The candles were provided with a kind of caps, that scarcely reached to half of the light, which would necessarily be extinguished after a short interval. Biondello, without your knowledge, brought back two others. The violent shock which the thunder made, caused the doors and windows, which were not quite shut, to fly open. The words that you heard were spoken by Biondello through a trumpet, the opening of which was hidden behind your writing-desk.

“And now recal to your mind that evening which you spent in Saint Benedetto, so merrily at the beginning of the ball, and the frightful scene which afterwards caused you

so much uneasiness. It will not, I know, be very surprising to you, if I say, that all you met with there was my contrivance. You turned yourself in the dance round your neighbour, which was myself. Suddenly, and in such a way that nobody could observe it, I put a little hook in your dress, and a great part of it was torn. You were obliged to leave the ball, and Biondello conducted you to a room, in which the Marquis had been long waiting for your appearance."

"Terrible! And who was that lady conversing privately with him? I almost believe still that it was Theresa, for"—

"It was not Theresa, but a common woman that we had engaged for the purpose."

"And the similarity?"

"Was a deception by a mask and dress."

"Oh! Why did I not enquire into your infernal deceit: I could have so easily discovered it, and then I should have been saved!"

"Not at all. Only a delay of a few days was all that you could gain by it, and you would have fallen again into another trap. But I knew how to estimate the degree of your passion, which would arise at such a sight, with sufficient correctness to judge beforehand what would be your conduct in such a situation. I was certain, that nothing would prevent you from hastening towards the Marquis with the dagger which lay upon the table, and thus was I enabled even the preceding night, to give you a warning concerning the murder, without your being able to hinder my premeditated intentions. And supposing I should have been mistaken, if by chance you had remembered those words, and had been collected, what should I have lost by it? In that case it was not your beloved, and therefore you would have been satisfied, and the warning would have been a weight upon you, and Biondello would have made you attentive to it, because you had found yourself in a situation in which a murder is not a strange phenomenon."

"But how could you induce your creatures to undertake a thing at such great peril? How, if I had murdered the Marquis?"

“Care was taken to prevent that. The dagger which Biondello laid upon the table when he went behind you into the room, was the only instrument at hand with which you could have injured him. At the point a little button was fixed, and when you were stabbing the Marquis, the blade returned into its handle, and only came out again when you let it loose: thus by the most violent blow it could not wound, although it deceived the mind. And is it not true that Civitella performed his character in a masterly manner? The blood which came from his supposed wound issued from a bladder filled with a red liquid which he had hidden in his bosom; and you, O great hero, were frightened so much by it, that though but a moment before you were all rage and revenge, you were persuaded by Biondello to run off with him, to which suggestion you yielded without the smallest resistance. He accordingly conducted you first to the convent of Franciscans, and increased your fears by his descriptions of the pursuits of the banditti, in order that he might convey you from that place to the convent ——, in which there had been previously made the necessary preparations. There you found your beloved.”

“Then it was herself?”

“She herself.”

“And how can this be possible?—I saw her die, and F— saw her dissected, and you restored her to me afterwards alive again!—Since I was induced to believe in your power of miracles, I see in it many contradictions.”

“You became yourself the cause of the contradiction. You were an eye-witness of all, and yet you will not trust your own experience!—Yes, it was your beloved, whom you saw ill and dying, yet this was nothing but deception.”

“Is it possible?—Was that a deception?”

“It was.”

“I saw her pale lips, her fallen cheeks, her languid eyes.—No, it must have been real.”

“Prince, when shall I make you understand?—Hark, how my chains rattle!—How could I raise her again, if her death had not been a deception? or if I were able to do so, should I sit here? At any other time such an error

would have given me pleasure ; but now it is my intention to destroy every blossom, which at a future period might give you happiness, even at the hazard of my own destruction. No, Prince, reconcile yourself to the fact, that the goddess whom so passionately adored, was assisting to deceive you ; and never, even in your dreams, must she hereafter appear to you, otherwise than a detestable being, that like a beautiful serpent would sting the person who caressed it. She *never* loved you. Or do you think still that it was another person, who really was ill and then died, and had only borrowed the likeness of your beloved ? If you think it is a fact, I would have you consider, that no person in the last hours of his life ever had so much presence of mind as to be able to play so visibly the character of another person ; and if it should have been so, what profit could have ensued from it, when she had only applied the fatal hour of dissolution to aid a deception ? Was not even the conversation, which you had with her, of such a nature that it was almost impossible to mistake another person for her ? ”

“ Yes, it is but too true. — But why do you not unravel my doubts rather than augment them ? ”

“ Ha ! — Could I but augment them — Her haggard cheeks, her pale lips, her hollow eyes, were nothing but — very strong painting, her feebleness nothing but disguise. — Do you not remember, that she pretended the light was insupportable to her, and that she sought to keep it always at a distance ? How easy was it then to deceive you, especially as you were not a cool spectator, but felt every pain which the sick person suffered. Consider, moreover, the situation of your mind when you came to the convent. ”

“ You oblige me to confess, that I am distressed I was so deceived — so shamefully deceived. ”

“ Is it so, Prince ? O that your feelings may not already be so blunted as to resist this attack ! O that I were able to give a thousand-fold pangs that could pierce you to the very heart ! Her death was nothing but an artificial swoon, at the beginning of which they contrived to have you absent, that you might not discover the truth. ”

“ But the dissection ? ”

“ Took place on another person, whom I had, merely

for that purpose, suffered to be poisoned. And to deceive your Baron F—, a mask of wax would have been sufficient, but her face remained covered for the greatest part of the dissection.

“ Now I thought it time to introduce you again to public notice, to show myself to you as your friend. That could not happen in a common manner: on that account the apparition * appeared to you, which was easily effected, because in your absence every thing had been prepared for it. The top of your bed was fastened to the ceiling, and this could be moved at pleasure. The genius which presented himself before you was the image of a picture, which a magic lantern threw upon the furniture of your bed, which was also prepared for that purpose.”

“ He seemed to lean down upon me.”

“ It seemed to be so, because it showed itself first in miniature, and then by a combination of mirrors, convex glasses, and other optical instruments, it became larger and larger. The words which you heard were spoken by a child (who had learnt them by heart) through a tube, which terminated in one of the bed-posts, and I myself let fall a letter through an opening over you.”

“ And the music? — I never before heard any thing similar: it was divine, and the harmony so charming, that I could not compare it with sounds produced from any instrument.”

“ They were cylindrical glasses, which were turned between wetted leathers†, and they were accompanied by a little organ with silver pipes, and a lute. The object of that was, in case you were asleep, to wake you, and to prepare you for the ensuing scene.”

“ And why was I not to open the letter before day-break?”

“ I was willing to try the strength of the belief which you would have in the whole appearance. If you had opened the letter sooner, you would have found nothing in it but blank paper, for the writing in it was written with

* See vol. i. p. 117.

† I have wondered very much to find here a kind of harmonica; a proof that the first invention is not so new as is by some persons imagined. — EDITOR.

sympathetic ink, which could only be visible at a certain time, as you have observed by the direction. I also should have punished you for that disobedience by an apparition, which in that case was already prepared."

"That all in the letter relative to the Marquis was merely a deception, is now comprehensible; for it is easy to imagine, that he could immediately recover, as he was not in reality wounded. — But how could the watchmen be deceived? or were they creatures of yours?"

"No; they were not. Do you think that I should have disclosed such things to them. I appeared to the Marquis in the described form, and the watch by my command had taken a sleeping draught which affected them at the very moment: — that I could do this without these people receiving harm from it, I have already told you."

"But did the impression which your apparition made upon the watch, become doubly strong when they awoke, and could see all that happened?"

"I shall prove the contrary, because their fancy presented to them more than they could in reality have observed."

"But might not one of them have had the thought to enquire into the business?"

"If so, nothing would have been lost. When you had formed the resolution to leave the convent, and had given your command to Biondello, from which I concluded that you still doubted the truth of the matter, I commanded that these words "conquer your disbelief," should be once more repeated to you, in order to confirm the idea that you were always surrounded by invisible powers, that attended to your words and actions. Of the conduct which Civitella manifested towards you, I say nothing. You know the issue of it, that in spite of the preceding event which happened, he obtained the former place of friendship in your heart."

"I must interrupt you here. I recollect a circumstance which you have not explained to me. Who was it that told me in the note, that I should go to a certain place, where I was attacked, but defended and rescued by the courage of a friend, who became afterwards my chamberlain? Yet

I will not enquire further into the business ; it was probably one of your plans."

"No, it was not: but both Biondello and myself sought to make it subservient to our wishes, and by bringing it forward as a scheme of your court to make you more inveterate against it. It happened during my absence, and I could not discover who had assisted me in so favourable a manner. You see that I am sincere. That the multitude of unpleasant incidents, united with the apparitions, must have made a strong impression upon your mind was very natural, but that it should induce you to harbour a disgust for the world, was not what I expected, according to your former manners of thinking. I supposed that you would sing penitential psalms, to bewail your former disbelief, and be thankful for the lash of correction, which had brought you to the right path. I was much mistaken, for you were occupied with nothing else than the idea of lost happiness. This induced you to think of committing suicide, as was proved by your soliloquies, which Biondello overheard through a crevice in your chamber-door, for no word could escape us."

"You have then been in my palace?"

"Very often."

"And did I never see you?"

"You did not know me. The old man, who visited Biondello as his cousin, was myself."

"Wonderful! However, proceed."

"Such ideas, I conceived, ought to be rooted from your mind, and that you should imbibe those which I found would be more necessary. The metamorphosis of the riband was the beginning."*

"And how did that happen?"

"Nothing was easier. Biondello had a false key to your bureau, and had coloured the riband before hand with a sympathetic liquid, which became visible in open air only, and disappeared again in a short space of time; he had observed, that you frequently took it out of the bureau, and this induced him to prepare it in that manner during your

* See vol. i. p. 153.

absence. The close of the scene was conducted by Biondello and the Marquis, of which I hope nothing will be incomprehensible to you, as they only played their studied performances, and the ring which confirmed your opinion, I easily procured. You will still remember, that Civitella conducted you into many societies merely for the purpose of leading you into dissipation; in consequence of which, all those sentiments were discarded which had been formerly your ambition. From perceiving that you had entirely abandoned them, I could easily draw a conclusion as to the situation of your mind, and that no new doubts might be thrown into your way, I contrived that the Bucentauro should be dispersed, because it would have appeared suspicious if the members of it had suddenly altered their opinions: and this was done in such a manner, that it might not destroy all that I had so carefully constructed; for the character of your disposition was so doubtful, that every object which offered itself could not fail to make a strong impression upon it, and produce great changes, which in a tranquil and reflecting mind would not have been possible. That appeared to me the best time to make you a proselyte. We could observe, by every occurrence, how willingly you would submit to an opinion from which you could assure yourself forgiveness of your sins, although the priest often laughs in his sleeve at the idea; and yet does not choose to expose its falsehood, because he would not injure his trade, which is so lucrative, and so well fitted for him, on account of the clandestine enjoyments which are attached to it. I could not introduce to you for that purpose a common person: it must be one whose fame of sanctity was not merely bombast, the lustre of which disappears in a clear light. I therefore chose the Bishop."

"Was he also in league with you?"

"No; his folly was increased to such a high pitch, that he sacrificed himself for others with the greatest pleasure."

"And you could persuade him to preach that sermon?"

"Does that seem singular to you? — Men, whose heads are full of chimeras, are to be found almost every where;

and such are easily persuaded to any undertaking, if it has but the least appearance of encouraging their favourite idea. And this was a clear case. I told him with great affliction you were a lost sheep from the flock, and tears immediately started from his eyes. I dared do nothing more than make him believe that a sermon might perhaps bring you back. It would have been a great scruple of conscience with him not to comply with my request."

"The Bishop told me afterwards, that you had acquainted him with the incidents of my life, and that you had begged of him to deliver that sermon. Was this also your desire?"

"Undoubtedly, and for that very reason I appeared before him in the same dress in which I had done to you, that you might know my person by the description he gave you. I was aware, that as soon as you learned this came from me, it would make a strong impression upon your mind, and augment my credit with you."

"But what if I had not gone to church?"

"I beg your attention to the issue, that you may learn how it happened. In that case I relied entirely on the Marquis and your own situation. He, whose lips always overflowed with taunts and scoffs against the admirers of religion, was at the same time with you a penitent. It was no wonder then that he should know that you had a desire to visit the church. You seemed unwilling to take that step alone: he offered you his hand, and you were then so much the more ready, because you had known him before to be the greatest freethinker, and now heard him praise the Bishop; and if, against all our expectation, you should have refused to go, you know me, that I never was at a loss for methods to guide you."

"Did you imagine that I should perhaps encourage the idea, that the Bishop was acquainted with you, when the Marquis persuaded me to go to the church with him?"

"Not only had I seen this beforehand, but I even reckoned upon it; and if you had not fallen yourself upon that thought, the Marquis knew how to guide you to it. Have you already forgotten how much I won afterwards upon you, when the death of the Marquis seemed to confirm the truth of what he had told you of me, and"—

“ And did all that happen by contrivance? The fever of the Marquis, his violent paroxysm, his death:—were these mere deceptions?”

“ Nothing more. As far as I know, the Marquis is yet alive.”

“ Oh God!—Proceed, that I may empty my cup of confusion to the dregs.”

“ That you shall, Prince, to the last drop. Do not fear that I leave off in order to deprive myself by so doing of the last happiness which I can be capable of enjoying. That the idea of what the Marquis could tell you from me might have still greater effect upon you (though his relation alone must have already appeared to you incredible), I interrupted him by my appearance. This procured me, in the mean time, the advantage of giving you new proof of my power and omnipresence. I came out from a thin tapestry; and that you might not approach me, and obstruct the second part of the miracle, the Marquis held you fast by your hand, till I had locked the room-door behind me.”

“ But I followed you immediately, and could not discover you. Where did you hide yourself so suddenly?”

“ I was the same monk who met you upon the staircase. My dress was so contrived, that I could change it immediately; and a waxen mask, several of which I carried with me, rendered it impossible that you should know me by my face. The Cardinal, who was present during my metamorphosis, was in the plot, and came on that account down the staircase to show you that I could have nowhere escaped without being observed, and, therefore, must necessarily have disappeared. You evinced by your conduct, that you wished to know me more distinctly. And I thought that the best opportunity to tell you by a speaking trumpet, which was applied as before, that your obedience only would make you worthy of that knowledge: and to my satisfaction your countenance showed that I might expect it from you. I thought it proper for me to show myself once more as your saviour, before I came forward with my demands. On that account I set all your creditors upon you, in order to put you in the greatest trouble; for I well knew that you had nobody at that time

who would interest himself for you, and endeavour to appease the noisy claimants. On that account I appeared as a paymaster, commanded to deliver you new sums of money. The period when the bishop could be useful to me was now over, and I found it necessary to put him out of the way, that he might not be hurtful to me. He had made you an admirer of religion. Others were now necessary to occupy his place, that a scheme might be raised upon a new foundation, as it agreed with my previous plans. On that account Sebastiano had sought to acquire the confidence of the bishop, that he might be able to get yours."

"You have not told me yet who the bishop was. That he was not the person which the writing that Sebastiano delivered to me after his death had represented him, I see now but too clearly."

"But very little was known about him; his history remained a profound secret: the only thing discovered was, that Germany was his birthplace, and this merely was betrayed by his great partiality to that nation. You once told the marquis a family secret: this and other favourable circumstances induced me to compose that history which Sebastiano delivered to you. The character of the bishop was too dear to you to entertain any doubt as to its being a genuine story. My object was gained. Your hatred against—— rose to the highest pitch, when you saw that so many deeds of murder were upon that side. You thought it was—— who had taken from you your beloved and the Bishop, and even aimed at your own life (as the sudden appearance of your lost servant proved to you), and your confidence increased towards Sebastiano."

"But why did you seek to make the innocent Baron F—— so suspicious and detestable to me, that I consented to his killing him? Could you not obtain your aim otherwise than by laying this crime upon my soul?" *

* I saw the letters which were fabricated in the name of Baron F—— and myself, and which were delivered to the Prince to stimulate him to such a deed. Never did I see handwritings so artfully and accurately imitated. I should have acknowledged all the letters which were forged under my name to have

“ F—— was now a hinderance to me. Who could say that, if an opportunity offered, he might not make his friendship again valuable? And would not your new friends stand upon the ruins of your old ones so much the surer? The future party which I premeditated for you would have required many other assassinations; and could I not hope with certainty, that the absolution for your sins (an easy task for a person to perform in the popish church) must be so much the more desirable to you, the greater burden you had upon your conscience?”

“ You have not yet explained to me the event that happened to my servant. — Was he also a creature of yours?”

“ No; he was too stupid.”

“ And yet how does that agree with what you told me? You said, you made him a prisoner, and at the same time a —— officer was about to hire him to assassinate me.”

“ You ought to admire my foresight. I caused your servant to be taken up, in order to extract some information from him; but principally to accommodate you with a new servant. To prevent any suspicion of that proceeding falling upon me, I examined him myself in an A——n uniform. The darkness and my art deceived him, and he very easily mistook me for the colonel, and my companions for officers: besides, we left it to his own choice, to think of us as he pleased. I imprisoned him so long as I wanted him. He was easily induced to believe that no banditti could kill you, and I had entirely accomplished my end with him. Your hatred towards your court, and the confidence you placed in me, who could warn you of approaching danger, increased very much.”

“ And you, who always panted after blood—I do not comprehend why you did not make use of that opportunity to your profit, but rather prevented me in that letter from taking any revenge.”

“ It was not yet time. I stopped the current, that it might burst forth with greater violence. And did I not give

you by that a new proof of my whole manner of thinking? And could I well miss having disclosed to you afterwards the whole business from a quarter where you even seemed to lend your arm to assist the Deity in punishing the crimes of others?

“Sebastiano, and his brethren of the clergy, had already done so much, that I hoped you would be entirely ready for an apostasy; and if this was not the case, then we were ready to expect, that as I made you so eager to obtain a near acquaintance with me, you would take that step with pleasure, in order to become worthy of me, as you were more firmly convinced that your whole fate depended upon my destination.”

“Before you proceed farther, I would ask you, if it happened also with your consent, that Biondello advised me to flee, as my creditors talked of arresting me?”

“As certainly as that he dared not undertake any thing against my will.”

“And if I had followed his advice?”

“I knew you better, and I only wanted to learn by the contrivance, if you had still a private resource to relieve you from your embarrassments, which I should have been obliged to prevent, as I intended to save you exclusively. In case you listened to Biondello’s advice, I was prepared, so that I had nothing to fear from a flight of that kind.”

Narrative of the Count O—— concluded.

Here we were interrupted.

From the beginning of the relation, the Armenian had often made great pauses, and affected to feel so feeble, that he was unable to speak long together. It was very visible that he sought nothing else by that than merely to gain time; we were notwithstanding induced to comply with his request, because we wished very much to hear from him the sequel of the history. We endeavoured to gain permission that a physician might visit him, and that he might be lightly fettered, though we perceived, in spite of all his dissimulation, that this was quite unnecessary; and the rigorous inquisitors were the more easily persuaded to

do it, because they still hoped to discover by that means the names of the other conspirators, as every other method to effect such a confession had failed. This appeared to me the proper place to mention this circumstance, and on that account I said nothing of it beforehand. As those circumstances made it absolutely necessary for us to visit the Armenian in his own room, when we were there one evening, the jailor opened the door, and the physician came in. He came often when we were present, but we did not attend to him; however, his timidity was frequently so visible, that it did not escape us. After some enquiries about his patient, he drew out a phial, and presented it to him. His anxiety was very great; and the significant looks which in the mean time he threw at the Armenian, made us presume that it contained poison, to liberate him from his deserved punishment, which one of his conspirators had perhaps sent to him. Johnson dashed the glass from his hands, before one of us could take that resolution. The swoon of the bearer convinced us that we had not deceived ourselves; and the savage countenance of the Armenian, as he gnashed his teeth, showed that he had well understood the hints of the physician.

The physician recovered very soon, and entreated us, in the most humble manner, not to ruin him, and to keep the matter a secret. We promised it, upon condition that he should discover to us every thing. This he did; and we perceived clearly by his sincerity and whole conduct that it was the first time that they had made use of him for such a business. We found that the phial really contained some physic (and this we could have perceived ourselves, as all was immediately strictly enquired into before it was brought to the Armenian); but, instead of the label, which, according to the custom of apothecaries, is tied round the neck of the bottle, we found a note to the Armenian. An unknown person had promised the physician a great sum of money for its delivery, half of which he had already obtained, and the other half he was to receive afterwards, if every thing succeeded well; and in case he should refuse, he had been threatened with death. His confusion at his entrance arose from seeing us; because he did not expect us there at such

an unseasonable hour. I looked at the note very attentively; but, except the common direction, I could not make out one word of it. The doctor told us that the writing would only become legible when we wetted it, and that he was going to make that known to the Armenian. We did so, and to our astonishment found the following contents, written in a hand so small that it was scarcely legible: —

“ After a thousand fruitless trials to convey a letter to your hands, this will, we think, succeed; although necessity forces us to make use of a man as bearer, who is not fit for such a task. Know that you, and we all, have been terribly deceived; the Polish Jew, to whom you trusted so much, was count O—— himself, whom we have not yet been able properly to reward for it. He has delivered your letters to the Inquisition, and many others are imprisoned. That we have still courage, although many of us are imprisoned, and that we still hope to save you, this attempt may be a proof. If we succeed, then we shall likewise be able to liberate the others, or at least revenge their death under your direction. Despair braves every thing. A life like ours, in which we are in perpetual anxiety lest one of the prisoners should be a coward, and betray us also, is become absolutely intolerable; our blood is also in a fermentation, that cannot be appeased till all means are exhausted. We leave it to your prudence to invent a pretext, by which you may contrive, either this or to-morrow night, to be conducted for examination to another place. Leave the rest to us. Your guards may be as many as they will, you are ours, and — free. If this should not succeed, we shall revenge ourselves, in spite of all. They keep secret our names, as they have done till now.

“ THE CONSPIRATORS.”

I was so imprudent, as to read this very loud to the Prince. The Armenian, who had lain, till now, in a kind of stupor, which (as I could now perceive) was nothing but attention, jumped up in a rage from his bed, dashed himself, before we could prevent him, so violently against the iron lock on the door, that the blood gushed from his

head, and he sank on the floor. He recovered again, and vented such a profusion of curses and imprecations as I never heard uttered by a mortal : his lips became blue and covered by a yellow froth. It would disgrace this paper to write down his expressions, and they would excite in the reader's breast the most horrid sensations. It was very evident that he must have still expected much from the narration to the Prince, and from the letter delivered to me, in order to procure his escape : and now all was entirely lost to him, and every way for his flight barricaded.

Dreadful beyond all description was his end. By repeatedly beating his head on the ground, his wound became incurable. The physician gave up all hopes of delivering him safe into the hands of justice for his well-deserved punishment ; and they resolved to leave him to himself, as they saw that the torments he was suffering were more than equal to the penalty which would be inflicted upon him by the most rigorous justice. Large maggots engendered in his wound, and devoured by piecemeal his brain, which formerly was so full of malice. The consequences of his condition now operated as if they had only waited for that moment to begin their frightful tormentings. There were holes in every part of his body ; and, to prolong his torments, they gave him the most nourishing food. A pestilential smell spread itself through the whole house. His eyes sunk and decayed in his head, his tongue became black, and gradually dissolved in a putrid saliva, which was discharged from his distorted jaws. Piece by piece his flesh fell from his rotten bones ; and he lived till all the joints separated themselves, and his heart, which seemed designedly to be preserved healthy, rotted in his breast.

I here drop the curtain over the most horrible scene which the eyes of mortals ever beheld. This spectacle affected us all very greatly, although we kept at a considerable distance from him ; but the Prince caught a violent fever, which protracted our stay for eight days longer. Nothing more was heard during that period of the conspiracy. They, however, made an attempt to conduct some person, instead of the Armenian, from the prison ; in order, by that trick

to draw the authors of the letter into the trap; but they perceived none of them: perhaps they might have heard something of what had passed, and prudently had secreted themselves. I pitied most the physician, who was the bearer of the letter. By the noise which the Armenian's head made against the lock of the door, the guard, accompanied by an officer, came in. They must have heard something of his entreaties to us, and the note unfortunately was still in my hands: his anxiety discovered the rest; and this very innocent man, who was only weak enough to be seduced by money, was punished as a traitor against the state.

Thus ended this conspiracy, whose only biographer I am; because a dark veil covers every thing in the history of Venice that could have any relation to it, and which only can be comprehensible to those who are exactly acquainted with it. The secret which the senate made of it was a hinderance to all enquiries of every kind, and the unknown criminals were never brought to light. That I intended to write nothing but the truth, I promised at the beginning of this narrative; and that I adhered to that intention in the history of the Armenian, I need scarcely assert. How far his confessions are true, I am not competent to decide; but that the greater part, or at least the chief event, could not be a tale, the letters in the history which I have communicated to the reader verbatim, must bear testimony. By a strict search in the habitation of the Armenian these letters were found, besides several other writings, in a private cupboard. Perhaps they might not have fallen into my hands, if I had not been employed to decipher them, in which business I was very dexterous; and hence I could conveniently take copies of them. At first I had intended to give them, and several other papers of consequence, in an appendix; but I changed my design, and inserted them in the places where the Armenian made mention of them, and I hope the reader will not be displeased.

I suppressed all real names, for which I think nobody will blame me. I wished not to cause any reproach to those to whom reputation is as sacred as to myself. I made it a maxim to give no offence to any family, by representing decoyed villains (members of many families) publicly, if I

could possibly avoid it. I think it my duty to add what I heard from the Prince, of that period where his friendship with the Armenian became so very intimate, and from which we knew nothing distinctly till now. He had employed apparitions of ghosts, and other methods, for the purpose of inspiring the Prince with revenge against the —— anew, and to obtain the Prince's consent for his assassination. God knows why he thought this necessary ! This, and the desire of being seated on the throne, and to blow the mouldering ashes into a great flame, was for him — (oh, that I must say so'!) — happily accomplished. But the Armenian, desired still more : he desired that the Prince should for ever bind himself to him by an oath as long as he lived, and be entirely subject unconditionally to his will, without ever asking him the reason of it. The good principles of the Prince were not yet so entirely eradicated from his heart as to consent to such a proposal ; for his soul was still able to draw the conclusion, in spite of all his prejudices, that the Armenian would not make such a demand if he always designed to display his good intentions. The villain, who was prepared for all, had already seen the possibility of that beforehand ; and, for that purpose, had spared the resurrection of the Prince's beloved. He, at the moment, beheld it as a miracle ; and, intoxicated with love, consented to every thing. Providence destroyed at that period the complicated schemes which it had, apparently, so long continued to regard with indifference.

We left Venice ; and my bosom beat high with joy for some time. I looked back, in order to survey that beautiful prospect, perhaps for the last time in my life. I beheld Venice, full of magnificent palaces and churches, surrounded by the sea, reflecting the first beams of Aurora. The upper part of the sun's bright orb richly illuminated the [eastern sky, whilst it seemed hesitating whether to emerge from the serene ocean. My eye was unwearied in beholding this delightful prospect ; — but my sensations, oh ! how far different were they from those which I felt at the first sight of this enchanting city ! It now resembled a beautiful prison, ornamented without ; which, the more we admire, the more we must feel for those who must perish

within its walls, helpless, and sometimes innocent : and my sadness increased with the approaching day, which rendered the charms of the scene more beautiful, till at last I proceeded so far, that it disappeared entirely from my eyes. We travelled as expeditiously as the health of the Prince would permit ; for another letter from —— had once more induced us to be as speedy as possible. About the middle of the journey, Lord Seymour and Johnson left us, and we could scarcely console ourselves for their departure ; for the necessary act of separation had torn from us two excellent men, united to our destiny by so many bands of fate. They relieved us from a sorrowful farewell, as they communicated their separation by letters which they left for us, for which they received mine and particularly the Prince's thanks.

“ I commend myself to Him who rules above,” said the Prince, with a look towards heaven when he saw the farewell letters ; and a stream of tears suffocated his words. I met my faithful Caspar in the same inn where I told him to stay, and I took him with me. His joy was without bounds ; and I should have been ashamed if I did not acknowledge what a faithful companion I had again found in him. We arrived at —— . The —— took the Prince affectionately in his arms. “ Oh ! it is too much ;” exclaimed the Prince, as he sunk down before him ; “ it is too much for a criminal.”

I cannot venture to describe the scene, where so much was expressed, although not a word was spoken. All possible methods to recover the Prince were tried, but in vain. Deep melancholy portrayed itself in marked furrows upon his face, from which internal sorrow had long since stolen every blush of health and contentment, formerly planted upon it by tranquillity. His cheeks were haggard, and his gloomy eyes appeared darker, from the shadow of his projecting eyebrows. His head was constantly bowed towards the earth, and in his eyelids were seen a perpetual tear. The idea of a happy eternity, and of a merciful God, alone tranquillised his mind.

In a deep wood there were the ruins of a castle upon a romantic and almost impenetrable mass of rocks, covered with moss. This castle formerly belonged to the rapacious

ancestors of the —— house. A whole century was unable to destroy it ; and lofty rocks and walls showed distinctly enough the former impregnability of the Castle of the Robbers, which had excited terror in the breast of every traveller whose way led him by it. The father of the present —— was a great admirer of hunting. Very often he pursued the game till night overtook him ; and he therefore built for himself, upon that former site of his ancestors, a small castle, where he frequently passed whole weeks in the pursuit of his favourite amusement. Since that time it had been scarcely ever visited ; and we were obliged to penetrate through thick bushes to come at a winding walk which led to it. This the Prince chose for his future habitation ; and we may easily judge, by the description, how much it was suited to the present temper of his mind ; as it stood in a romantic country, and the tranquillity of the solitude was seldom interrupted. His desire was satisfied, and the —— flattered himself with the hope, that retirement might perhaps work powerfully upon his mind, and that the attachment to society would one day awake within him the desire of again revisiting the world. But he had mistaken himself very much. He did not know, after all that had happened to this unfortunate man, added to his general character, that sorrow and melancholy had already so much gained the ascendancy, that happiness could no longer be enjoyed by him ;—like a blossom, raised by a nourishing shower upon a barren soil, which immediately fades again, because the hot reflected beams of the sun destroy all powers of vegetation.

Here he lived apart from all society, except an old and faithful servant. He was not disturbed, because every one honoured his sacred retreat ; and —— sometimes paid him a visit, to see how far his hopes might be fulfilled ; but he always returned more sorrowful. He entreated him several times to return to his court, or visit him there, but he as constantly refused his request. At the desire of the Prince, and by my own wish, I remained there as long as possible ; but business at my own court making my presence necessary, I could not longer delay.

Persuaded that it would deprive me of all former connections, to spend the rest of my days there, I departed ; but

the unpleasing reflection, that I should never again see the Prince, which occupied my mind at my departure, was too well founded. By the many sufferings and troubles which had seized upon me of late so violently, the former stability of my health became very feeble. Not till the lapse of six months was I able to return, and I found, instead of the Prince, the grave which enclosed his remains. I knew nothing of his death ; and my heart began fondly to anticipate the feelings of our meeting, as I approached the wood, in which stood his habitation. It was my custom to travel on foot in fine weather, being more agreeable to me, and affording a better opportunity of observing the surrounding objects. I pursued it now. The tears rolled from my cheeks, when I arrived at the foot of a mountain. Above my head the branches of the trees formed a grove, through which we scarcely could perceive the valley underneath, which was ornamented by an opposite hill ; upon which, oak trees, the produce of centuries, raised their majestic heads. I stood before a deep dale, and enjoyed the romantic prospect which presented itself to me. I was lost in the contemplation of it, and on each twig my eye dwelt with a voluptuous pleasure. On surveying the spot attentively, a building appeared through the thick brushwood which grew upon one side of the valley. As I had not expected this, my curiosity became stimulated to enquire what it was. I marked the spot, and walked toward the bushes, through which I passed with much trouble. As I bent back the last bush, I found myself in small open space, ornamented with trees and shrubs. Before me I perceived a small cottage, and over against it a large oak tree. In its shade arose a very simple monument, which buried its top in the close covert of the boughs. I was stepping nearer, when I observed a grey-bearded old man, who was kneeling before it, praying fervently. I stood in silence, and my feelings pressed me to join his devotions. He rose. What a figure ! Without reflecting, my hand seized my hat to uncover my head, that I might pay homage to this venerable old man. In the deep furrows of his forehead and cheeks beamed content : a smile upon his countenance was expressive of that tranquillity of conscience which fears not to meet the

Eternal Judge, who is not unmindful of the weakness of human nature. To all appearance he had suffered much from misfortune.

He did not appear to observe me, and went into his cottage. I approached the monument with a sensation which I cannot describe. A short inscription told me, that the Prince slumbered there till the day of the resurrection. Whilst I was rising from the hallowed spot, the old man stood behind me. With emotion he pressed my hand. "You have prayed:" said he, addressing himself to me. "I observed it with joy and ecstasy. Thus act the children of happiness: be then welcome to me in this solitude, which will neither be disturbed nor dishonoured by you." "You are right, old man," I answered him; "but I am no child of happiness: he who slumbers here was my friend, and—" "Are you, perhaps, the Count O——, of whom the deceased spoke so much to me? — Then I understand you before you finish your speech." I answered his question in the affirmative; and with a sacred ecstasy he led me towards a grass bench before the cottage, where we sat down together.

"Your friend," he began, "journeyed very often quite alone into this wood, and chose the deepest solitude for meditation. Thus he discovered me after your departure in my retirement. I loved him soon, and he was no less fond of me. He frequently went away, but sometimes he tarried with me for days and nights together. Each day he waited for your coming back: you came not. If he should come (he said to me, a few days before his last), and I should be no more, then deliver him in my name my farewell, and say that I will thank him for his love in a better world. You are as able to tell him so as I could be myself. Daily I pray near his grave, and from this day I shall thank God that he has given me an opportunity of discharging my commission."

We spoke of nothing but of the Prince. What the old man told me with great prolixity of the last period of his life, I will relate to the reader as briefly as possible. Every trifling particular, although interesting to a friend, would, perhaps, be insignificant to a third person, and on that ac-

count the principal things only are related. He associated with this old man, sacrificing the remainder of his life to regain that repose of conscience which he formerly enjoyed; and he succeeded, as far as his situation made it possible. Firmly convinced of the love of God, death became a friend to him, who would bring him still nearer to the knowledge of this Eternal Being; and he looked forward to his dissolution with a mild and patient satisfaction. A few weeks before his death, he came to the old venerable hermit: he was more lively than customary. "God has still procured me a happiness which I do not deserve," he exclaimed, and delivered to him a letter which he had just received. It was from the Greek lady. The old man showed it to me, and the following is a copy of it: —

"Beloved of my soul! — Thus I call you, although the greatest malice has induced me to deceive you. My conscience has cleared itself before the Almighty. I was deceived like yourself. By birth I am a German lady. Death deprived me at Venice of my mother, and with her of every comfort. A young unexperienced girl, I was then abandoned to the wide world. An accident brought to me in my helpless situation that Armenian. My person was allowed by all to possess an attractive beauty, and on that account only could I explain to myself those looks which he gave when he threw himself in my way as a benefactor. The good principles which he found within me, seemed to make it necessary to proceed carefully with me: he appeared a saint. At length I received directions from him to play the character in that church where you saw me first. He had found way to play upon my vanity so much by the pretence that you had already fallen in love with my picture, that I not only earnestly followed his directions, but I also gave myself all possible trouble to interest you, though it was against my inclination. But too soon I became in reality what I had only appeared to you; I loved you tenderly. The fear of losing you again, and his tricks and threats, prevented me always from discovering myself to you: many times this confession trembled upon my tongue, and —

“ My weakness will not longer permit me to hold the pen. I feel that the hours of my existence are few, and on that account I must conclude. More than a hundred times I was obliged to stop, in writing this letter. I discovered your abode, and was anxious to find you there, and implore your forgiveness ; but my powers failed me. Instead of me, this letter comes, and, alas ! may it give you a happy sensation. That you will not doubt this confession of my innocence (as I make it at the brink of the grave), I am convinced as firmly as of my forgiveness by God.

“ How difficult is it for me to conclude this epistle to my beloved ! but I am compelled to do it ; for I feel my weakness increase upon me, and you probably have observed it in several parts of what I have written. After my death, you will receive this letter ; and, not to disturb you, I conceal the place where my remains will slumber until the junction of our souls. In that abode, where the veil, which before concealed from us the reason of our fate, shall be removed, where a perpetual bliss shall unite our souls forever, I will tell you far more than I am now able to make known to you ! Farewell ! Purified by my God from all sins and faults, and clothed in the garment of the blessed, at the gates of eternity, I will hasten toward you.

“ Your

“ THERESA.”

With this letter the Prince sat himself under an oak tree, upon the same spot which he had selected for his perpetual rest. He read it very often, whilst the Hermit, who was placed by his side, celebrated her memory in conjunction with the Prince, amidst loud peals of thunder which rolled over them. “ I shall soon be with thee, oh Theresa ! ” he exclaimed, as he lifted his hands and eyes towards heaven.

At that instant, a flash of lightning, attracted by the tree under which they were sitting, darted through the branches, and struck him lifeless to the earth. — Peace be to his ashes !